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# NARRATIVE

OF THE

LATE MILITARY AND POLITICAL OPERATIONS

IN

# THE BIRMESE EMPIRE,

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY, ITS MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND INHABITANTS.

BY

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[No one can have perused the preceding part of this work in which an accurate reprint has been given of the exceedingly valuable account furnished by Colonel Symes of his historical researches and diplomatic exertions in the Birmese empire, without feeling conscious that his stock of useful knowledge has been increased, and that a desire has been excited to know more of a people, in many respects so remarkable. Colonel Symes, it will have been perceived, while he traces in the distinctest manner the history of the Birmese from the earliest period in which we have any authentic traditions concerning them, is necessarily, from the time in which he lived and wrote, obliged to stop short just when he has brought us down to near the commencement of the

present century, when the transactions which began to take place between the British government in India, and the neighbouring kingdom of Ava, were assuming an interest and importance they had never before possessed. Colonel Symes, however, by the various sources of information of which he had it in his power to avail himself, and which he seems to have exhausted with unabating zeal and industry, for the advantage of his countrymen, has prepared us for understanding these transactions, and for attaching to them an interest with which they might not otherwise have been invested. In the sequel, it is hoped that something of a succinct and intelligible narrative has been given of our political and military operations with the Birmese since the year 1800.]

# NARRATIVE, &c.

On the return of Colonel Symes from the court of Ava in the year 1796, it appeared not improbable that the feelings of mutual conciliation and friendship, which he had succeeded in establishing between the two countries, might have continued unimpaired for several years to come. It seems, however, a matter of very great difficulty to calculate upon any continuance of pacific dispositions on the part of the golden-footed monarch of Birmah. His policy seems rather to be that of restless ambition and perpetual action; and if, at any time, he is quiet, it is the quiet of exhaustion and consequent necessity—not of inclination. Nor is it to be denied, that, with the aid of his ministers of state, and the other machinery of his despotic government, he possesses a talent for negotiation, and personal as well as national aggrandizement, which might reflect credit upon the Machiavels of perhaps more civilized, but not less artful cabinets. It cannot, therefore, be cause of much wonder, that, not long after the termination of Colonel Symes' embassy, new causes of distrust and contention arose.

It appears, that though the Birmese, by force of arms, had subdued Arracan, yet, that they had never been able to reconcile its inhabitants to their yoke. Nor, indeed, is it likely that they ever attempted it; for, with the Birmese, the conquered are always slaves. Accordingly, the governors they sent into this province, proceeded to such tyrannical extremities in the burdens they imposed upon the inhabitants, that, rather than submit to their grinding rapaciousness, the Arracanese left their country in crowds, and, without either asking or receiving permission, established themselves in the British territory of Chittagong. They who thus emigrated acquired the appellation of Mughs. It was easy to foresee that a system of desertion, proceeding on so extensive a scale, and rendered so easy of execution by the facility of intercourse between Chittagong and Arracan, which are separated only by the river Naaf, could not be very agreeable either to the pride or selfishness of the Birmese monarch. Nor was the English government blind to the mischievous consequences which might result from its being supposed to harbour the fugitives of a neighbouring state. Its exertions, however, to prevent the continuance of the evil, were of little avail; and by the year 1799, it is calculated that nearly two-thirds of the entire population of Arracan were established on large tracts of land in Chittagong, which had hitherto lain waste and useless. The jealousy and anger of the Birmese was now effectually roused. They looked upon the refugees as their slaves, by whose flight they had been deprived of actual property. An army, therefore, of

four thousand men was speedily organized, and, without much ceremony, ordered to march in pursuit of the runaways into Chittagong. Here, for some months, an irregular system of warfare was carried on against the new settlers; but perceiving that its results were ineffective, a letter, couched in those haughty terms which the Birmese are so fond of arrogating, was addressed to the head magistrate of Chittagong. It demanded, in the name of the Birman Sovereign, that the fugitives should be given up by the British; and in case of refusal, an invasion was threatened of a more extensive and formidable kind. To this despatch it was of course answered, that as long as the Birmese army remained within the British territory, no negotiation could be entered into. The invaders, however, at first refused to withdraw; but after having, with a good deal of courage, withstood the attack of a British force, which was marched to meet them, they, of their own accord, repassed the frontier.

Notwithstanding the determined feeling with which the Birmese seem to have been actuated, it does not appear that our government in India felt itself called upon to take any steps towards conciliating them. On the contrary, it was resolved to give the Mughs a permanent and healthy settlement on the borders of Arracan, between the Ramoo river and the Naaf. This was probably done as a matter of sound policy, and in the expectation that the settlement would form a useful barrier between our possessions and those of their enemies, the Birmese. The results, however, did not answer the expectations. The Mughs, soured

by disappointment, and still languishing to regain the country of their forefathers, which they felt had been unjustly taken from them, instead of being content with the usual occupations of peaceful colonists, formed themselves into tribes of predatory marauders, making continual incursions into Arracan, and nourishing, with inveterate and hereditary ardour, their hatred of the Birmese. For several years, these struggles and desultory contests being carried on at a distance from the seat of government, either of Ava or British India, seem not to have excited much attention. It is proper however to remark, that the Birmese, having been foiled in their attempt to induce the Company to refuse an asylum to the expatriated Mughs, always affected to hold it responsible for the injuries they sustained from their hostile incursions.

Passing over an interval of some years, in which affairs went on in this manner, without any important results ensuing on either side, we find that, in 1811, some transactions took place which, as they paved the way for others of still more serious consequence, are worth recording. Among those who had been driven out of Arracan, and had taken refuge in Chittagong, was a man of some note, and not destitute of abilities, named King Berring. Having been deprived of considerable possessions in his own country, he naturally felt the hardship of his situation the more. Retaining, however, much of the influence he formerly possessed over the Arracanese, he induced not only a large body of Mughs, but also many of those who had not as yet left their country, but

who secretly hated the Birmese, to join him in a general and well concerted invasion of the whole province of Arracan. He was so successful, that in a short time the capital alone was able to offer him any resistance. As the standard of what the Birmese considered rebellion, had been openly erected in Chittagong, and as King Berring had been residing for some time under British protection, it was naturally enough concluded by the Court of Ava, that his present proceedings were countenanced by our Government. This, however, was by no means the case; and in order to remove any such impression, Captain Canning was ordered to proceed to Rangoon, and from thence, if he saw occasion, to Amerapoora, in order to satisfy the Birmese Court that the insurgent chief and his followers had acted, if not in express opposition to the commands of the Bengal government, at least without its concurrence. This mission did not end altogether so favourably as could have been wished. The Birmese authorities at Rangoon, far from treating the British envoy with that respect to which the official situation he held entitled him, seem to have thought that they were more likely to ingratiate themselves with their sovereign, by casting upon him every possible slight short of direct insult. Under these circumstances, Captain Canning did not think it prudent to venture further into the interior, being well informed that it was the object of the government to keep him, if possible, as a hostage, until the Company should have consented to give up the insurgent Mughs. These treacherous designs he contrived to frustrate, not without considerable

difficulty; and in 1812 he returned to Calcutta, without having been able to allay the suspicions of the Birmese.

In the mean time, King Berring had not been idle. He fought, however, with various reverses of fortune, being one month at the head of a powerful army, and the next an outlawed rebel, without a follower. When they who had joined his standard were driven out of Arracan, they invariably sought refuge in Chittagong; and the protection which seemed thus to be afforded them in the British territories, so enraged the Birmese, that the Rajah of Arracan officially announced his intention of overrunning the country with an army 80,000 strong, unless all the principal insurgents were given up. Our force on the frontiers at the time being exceedingly small, it was necessary to have recourse to negotiation, to prevent, if possible, the threatened attack. Before any thing decisive, as to the course our Government should pursue with respect to the refugees, had been determined on, King Berring, who for a while had been in concealment, again made his appearance at the head of a considerable force. He gave battle to the Birmese, but was defeated, and his adherents again retired to Chittagong. This affair only served to exasperate still more the Rajah of Arracan, who openly accused the British of a breach of faith, and declared a war inevitable. Our Government, however, was not to be menaced into submission. Its independent and strictly honourable line of conduct probably prevented the matter from coming to the extremity it otherwise would have reached. Towards the end of the

year 1812, King Berring, who had again taken the field, was attacked by a British detachment, and defeated. This measure tended much to pacify the Birmese; and upon the succession of the Earl of Moira to the government of India, every cause of complaint which they could possibly have had against us was removed, by their being allowed to send small parties of their troops through our territories, in search of King Berring and his partisans. For some time longer, that indefatigable, but unfortunate chief, contrived to set at defiance the united efforts of his enemies; but his death, which took place in 1815, seemed to hold out some hope of greater tranquillity.

This hope, nevertheless, proved fallacious. The Birmese had of late years been brought into more immediate contact with their British neighbours, and were not a little startled to find a power established on their frontiers, capable not only of resisting all their attacks, but even, should occasion require, of shaking from its security the very centre of their dominions. This discovery cannot be supposed to have been very agreeable to the grasping and suspicious Court of Ava; and accordingly we find, that measures were speedily formed, upon an extensive scale, by which it was hoped effectually to crush the prosperity and power of the Bengal government. Not only were active preparations carried on at home, but, under the pretence of collecting certain sacred Hindoo writings, a mission was despatched to Calcutta, for the purpose of exciting the upper provinces of Hindostan to unite with the Birmese in a simultaneous declaration of war. In 1818, the Marquis

of Hastings had certain information that the Birmese monarch had secretly joined the Mahratta confederacy, which had, for its object, the entire subversion of our Indian empire. To afford the court of Ava some pretence for having recourse to open hostilities, a letter was received by the Governor-general in the July of that year, which, on behalf of the king of Ava, unceremoniously demanded the cession of the provinces of Chittagong, Ramoo, Moorshedabad, and Dacca, which were henceforth to become dependencies of the Birmese empire. To this demand, which was made through the medium of the Rajah of Ramree, the Governor-general replied, by a letter to the viceroy of Pegue, couched in the following terms:—"That if the letter he had received, had really been written by order of the king of Ava, his Excellency lamented, that persons so incompetent to form a just notion of the power of the British nation in India, should have been able to practise on the king's judgment; that any hopes which the king might have been induced to entertain, that the British Government would be embarrassed by contests in other quarters, were entirely delusive; that we were indifferent to attack from the king of Ava, further than, as we should regard with concern, the waste of lives in an unmeaning quarrel; that his Excellency trusted, however, that the king would perceive the folly of the counsellors who would plunge him into a calamitous war, by which the commerce of his empire would be wholly destroyed; and that if, as the Governor-general could not but believe, the rajah of Ramree had, for some unworthy purpose of his own, assumed the tone of insolence and menace, exhibited in his

letter, without the authority of the king, he hoped that a procedure so calculated to breed dissensions between two friendly states, would be visited by the king with the severe displeasure it deserved." *

The mild but decided tone of this answer, combined with the unexpected events of the Mahratta contest, kept the court of Ava quiet; and in the ensuing year (1819), the death of the king, Minderajee-praw, diverted still more effectually its attention for a short time from British affairs. Minderajee-praw, whose character is so well described by Colonel Symes, enjoyed a long and prosperous reign of thirty-seven years; at the end of which period, according to the inflated style of the Birmese state papers, "the immortal king, wearied with the fatigues of royalty, went up to amuse himself in the celestial regions." He was succeeded, not by his son, who, during the period of Colonel Symes' embassy, was the *Engy Teekien* or prince royal, and to whom Minderajee-praw is said to have been much attached, but who died before his father, in consequence of which, his grandson, the prince's son, became heir to the throne. His claims, however, were not uncontested. The brothers of the late king, as is not unfrequently the case, when the laws of succession are not firmly established, became his decided enemies. But failing in their machinations, the Prince of Tonghoo, with his family and many of his friends, was executed, and the Prince of Prome,

* Extract of a despatch from Fort William, 17th March 1820.

whose daughter the new king had married, was thrown into prison, where he died soon afterwards. On the 2d of November 1819, the Emperor was solemnly crowned at Ava.

The object to which his attention was first directed, was the reduction of the province of Cassay, on the northern frontier of the empire. This territory had been hitherto independent of Ava; but internal dissensions having arisen, and there being two claimants for the crown, one very naturally asked the assistance of the Birmese, and the other of the British. The former, ever willing to avail themselves of any opportunity for increasing their own influence, marched an army into Assam, and placed a Rajah of their own choosing, tributary to their court, in the government. The British, on the other hand, expressly refused to interfere in the internal affairs of foreign states. It seems impossible, however, for the Birmese to come into contact with any foreign nation without speedily picking a quarrel with them. Having gained possession of Assam, they found nothing beyond but the eastern boundary of Bengal, and it was not long before they manifested their desire to cross that boundary. The Rajah, who had sought our assistance, and who, as he maintained, had been unjustly driven from his birthright, though he could not prevail upon the Bengal government to give him any active support, was nevertheless allowed, upon the principle of neutrality which it adopted, to transport gunpowder and military stores through the British territories to Assam. This was a sufficient handle for the Court of Ava. Their celebrated general Maha-Bandoola was sent to take the command of their military force in Assam, and,

soon after his arrival, it was intimated to the British local authorities, that if the Ex-Rajah was allowed to remain in the Company's territories, he would be taken thence by force. The conciliating answer, however, made by the Company, once more had the effect of delaying an open rupture; and the war which the Birman emperor was at the time carrying on against his hereditary enemies, the Siamese, engrossed probably the greater part of his attention. The year 1822, therefore, passed over without any acts of hostility on either side. Subsequent events, however, speedily showed that the pacific and conceding disposition evinced by the Company only tended to increase the insolence and rapacity of the Birmese.

In 1823, various acts of aggression were systematically committed. Several of our Mugh subjects were attacked and killed on board their own boats in the Naaf river; and a party of the Company's elephant hunters were taken from within the British boundaries and carried prisoners to Arracan. Even these insulting acts might have been overlooked; but an attack made upon the British guard in the island of Shuparee was of a still more serious kind, and could be regarded in no other light than as an explicit declaration of undisguised hostility. We had retained the undisputed possession of this island for many years, and nothing but a determination to force us into a war could have suggested the attempt to wrest it from us. The attack was made on the 24th of September, by a body of six hundred Arracanese troops, who killed and wounded several of our soldiers, upon whom they came altogether unexpectedly. They were, however,

speedily reinforced, and the enemy was driven out of the island. A remonstrance was also immediately addressed to the Court of Amerapoora, but no answer was deigned to be returned. The Governor-general now became aware that there was but one line of conduct left for him to follow, and that further forbearance on his part would have been attributed to pusillanimity, and advantage taken of it accordingly. On the fifth of March, therefore, 1824, an official declaration of war was issued by the Government of Fort William—characterized not more strongly by its temperate firmness, than by its British frankness and honesty.

This step excited, as was to be expected, no inconsiderable sensation throughout our possessions in British India, as well as in this country, as soon as the news arrived. It was at Calcutta, however, from its vicinity to the Chittagong frontier, that its importance was principally felt. It was known there that one of the Birmise generals had already gasconadingly announced his intention of taking possession of the town, *preparatory to his march to England.* It was destined, however, that ere long the arrogance of this haughty nation should be effectually tamed. The war opened with military operations on the frontiers of Sylhet and Chittagong, to both of which districts troops were speedily marched. It was in Sylhet and Assam that affairs of greatest consequence took place. Our troops there were under the command of Major Newton, who, in several engagements with the far superior forces of the Birmese, gained decisive advantages over them. The first success obtained by the enemy

was in an affair which took place at Doodpatlee, after Colonel Bowen had arrived to the assistance of Major Newton with a force from Dacca. The Birmese, amounting to about 2000, had, according to their invariable custom, stockaded themselves with unusual strength and care, and " fought," says Colonel Bowen, " with a bravery and obstinacy which I had never witnessed in any troops." The action lasted from early in the day till night-fall, when the British were obliged to retire with a severe loss. The Birmese, however, also suffered much ; and soon after, evacuating their stockades, retreated in the direction of Assam.

Fresh troops were sent into Assam under the command of Colonel M'Morine, who, by the latter end of March, had penetrated as far as Gowahati. The Birmese government finding it necessary to concentrate their force in another quarter, withdrew the greater part of their troops from Assam, and left Colonel M'Morine in quiet possession of the country. In Chittagong, in the meantime, affairs were going on less successfully. Captain Noton held the chief command on this frontier, but an error seems to have been committed in intrusting too few men to his charge. The small corps he commanded was attacked in May by a powerful body of Birmese, and totally defeated, Captain Noton and most of his brother officers being slain in the engagement. The alarm speedily reached Calcutta, before which it was imagined the Birmese would instantly make their appearance, there being no intermediate force to oppose their advance. In this emergency, the European inhabitants formed themselves into a militia, and a large proportion of the crews of the

Company's ships were landed to aid in protecting the town. But the panic was soon discovered to be greater than the occasion required. The enemy did not think of approaching one step nearer than Ramoo, where, for a time, they took up their head-quarters.

While these events were passing on the northern frontiers of the Birman empire, a plan was matured by the Bengal government, the execution of which was to effect an entire change in the features of the present war. Hitherto, we had been acting principally on the defensive; but it was necessary, considering the enemy we had to deal with, to make it a leading object not more to repel aggression, than to humble arrogance and intimidate fool-hardiness. It was necessary to show the Birmese that we could not only endure, but inflict;—that as we were not easily roused into anger, so our animosity was only the more fearful when it at length broke forth. The measure which was about to be carried into effect was that of despatching a considerable force by sea to make a descent upon some part of the enemy's coast, where probably such a visitation was but little expected. The force destined for this important expedition was supplied by the two Presidencies of Bengal and Madras; and, when united, was put under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Archibald Campbell. The place of rendezvous was the port of Cornwallis, in the Andaman islands, where the troops arrived by the 3d of May 1824. From thence Sir Archibald Campbell sailed on the 5th, direct for Rangoon, detaching one part of his force under Brigadier M'Reagh against the Island of Cheduba, and another under Major Wahab against

the Island of Negrais. On the 10th the fleet anchored in the Rangoon River, and on the following morning sailed up to the town, in order of attack, receiving little or no molestation by the way.

The Birmese at Rangoon seem to have been taken completely by surprise; and when the news of the arrival of a British fleet spread over the country, nothing could exceed the wondering consternation of the inhabitants. In whatever virtues, however, the Birmese may be deficient, certainly courage is not of the number; and as soon as their first emotions of astonishment had subsided, they prepared at all hazards for a resolute, and, in this instance, we ought perhaps to say, patriotic defence. Perceiving their feebleness, and being not as yet sufficiently aware of their hardihood and folly, the British commander humanely forbore opening a fire upon the town, in expectation that its governor would offer him some terms of capitulation. But it was soon discovered that no such intention was entertained. A feeble and ill-directed fire was commenced upon the ships from a sixteen-gun battery, which was in a very short time effectually silenced. The troops were then ordered into the boats to effect a landing, and in less than twenty minutes the British flag was seen flying in the town, without the loss of a single life, or the discharge of a single musket. It was only the houses of Rangoon, however, that were thus got possession of. The inhabitants had all betaken themselves to the jungles in the neighbourhood, and our troops found nothing but a collection of empty habitations to refresh themselves in after their fatigues. The quantity of ordnance

captured was indeed considerable, but in general of a very imperfect description. The Islands of Cheduba and Negrais fell into our hands much about the same time, though not without a very spirited opposition on the part of the inhabitants of both.

The prospects of our little army, now quartered in Rangoon, were any thing but encouraging. The town was empty, in the most literal sense of the word. Every attempt to establish any intercourse with the native Birmese, for the purpose of obtaining provisions, was found to be fruitless. The rainy season was just setting in, which in Eastern climates is always peculiarly unhealthy to European constitutions; and, as far as any accurate information could be procured, it was ascertained that his golden-footed Majesty was making preparations, on the most magnificent scale, "to cover the face of the earth with an innumerable host, and to drive back the wild foreigners into the sea from whence they came." To add still further to the discomfort of Sir Archibald Campbell's situation, some disagreements unfortunately took place between the naval and land forces. It had been expected, it is true, that the mere capture of Rangoon, together with the two other maritime possessions of the Birmese, already alluded to, would have produced such an effect on the Court of Ava, that terms of peace would have been immediately proposed. Nothing, however, was further from the intentions of that proud Court; and subsequent events proved, that though the Birmese may be beaten, they will die rather than confess they have been so.

The Commander-in-chief, therefore, finding that,

as yet, no practical benefits had resulted from his success, and that, on the contrary, the almost impenetrable jungles which surround Rangoon were rapidly filling with troops from all quarters, admirably skilled in every species of desultory warfare, and prepared to drive him either once more into his ships, or, if he thought of advancing, to dispute every inch of ground with him, saw the necessity of having recourse immediately to bold and vigorous measures. His first object was, to ascertain the possibility of obtaining a sufficient number of boats, manned by skilful pilots, to convey a considerable part of his force up the Irrawaddy. This river may be set down as the great high road of the Birman empire. Indeed all the knowledge which we possess of that country, was gathered by Colonel Symes, and our other envoys, upon its banks. It runs from north to south, through the whole of the kingdom of Ava; and to it alone is to be attributed the internal commercial prosperity of the empire. Every village on its banks is obliged to furnish one or more war-boats, carrying from forty to fifty men each; and of these his Majesty can muster, on the shortest notice, four or five hundred. An impression appears to have been entertained by our Indian government, that, from the spirit of dissatisfaction which they supposed must necessarily exist in the minds of many of the inhabitants against the tyranny of their despotic monarch, they would be found, in numerous instances, willing to give all the aid in their power to the British. It was recollected, besides, that Rangoon was a town of Pegue, one of the conquered provinces of the Birman empire, and that, for a long period of years, the most deter-

mined hostility had existed between the two countries. There was perhaps nothing irrationally sanguine in the hopes which these considerations gave rise to, but they were entirely fallacious. Whatever complaints the Birmese might have among themselves against their government, and however severely the Peguers might continue to feel the subjection into which they had been reduced from a state of independence, yet, like the people of ancient Greece, at the appearance of a common foe, all these causes of internal dissension were forgotten. Not a single boatman acquainted with the navigation of the Irrawaddy was to be procured; and whether inspired with fear or patriotism, but one desire was manifested, from the throne to the hovel, to shun all intercourse with the English. It would probably also have been dangerous to have ventured far up the Irrawaddy, unless the cooperation of a land force could have been depended on; and before that could be the case, it would be necessary to clear the way by some hard fighting. The design, therefore, was for the present abandoned.

In the meanwhile, the rainy season set in with all its attendant evils. The rain fell in such quantity, that it was impossible for our troops to keep the field, and act upon a regular system. Harassed, too, by continual incursions of the enemy, threatened with an approaching famine, and reduced by an epidemic, which broke out amongst them, to a state of the greatest debility, it seemed almost impossible for them to achieve any thing of importance. Neither the hostility, however, of the Birmese, nor of the climate, could subdue British courage. For six months, from May till Decem-

ber, our operations were confined to Rangoon and its vicinity, it being the determination of the enemy to prevent us, if possible, from advancing a step into the country. Our ultimate success in compelling them to retreat further into the interior, and thereby affording us an opportunity of following them, depended not so much on the decisive advantage gained in any one action, as on the continued judgment and skill which regulated the whole system of our military tactics. We never advanced a few miles out of Rangoon for the purpose either of dislodging the enemy from a position they had taken up, or of gaining possession of some post which appeared of importance, without being almost sure of achieving our object. But as soon as a certain resistance had been made, the Birmese were accustomed to retreat leisurely from their stockades into the jungles, where, though we knew we had beaten them, it was impossible for us to follow. Many rencontres of this description took place, into the details of which it is unnecessary for us to enter. A short account of one or two of the most remarkable will suffice as a description of the whole.

On the 28th of May, the British and Birmese troops came into contact for the first time. Sir Archibald Campbell led his forces about five miles up the Rangoon river, and found the enemy had taken a position in one or two scattered villages, flanked on both sides by a jungle. Confident in the strength of their situation, they received the British with shouts and cries of "Come! come!" A heavy fire was immediately commenced upon our troops, whose muskets having suffered from

rain, were so inefficient that it was necessary for them to close without loss of time. The Birmese were altogether unable to withstand the violence of our charge; but, shut in as they were in their own encampment, and thrown into irretrievable confusion by the impetuosity of our attack, their only alternative was to continue fighting with desperate resolution until they were cut to pieces. Being unaccustomed to give, they did not expect quarter, and in self-defence, therefore, our soldiers were unfortunately obliged to disregard the dictates of humanity. Having taken possession of the villages, in which about 400 Birmese lost their lives, Sir Archibald reconducted his troops to Rangoon.

Soon after this affair two deputies arrived from the Birmese camp, under pretence of negociating a peace, but in reality, only with the view of gaining time for the main body of the enemy to strengthen themselves as much as possible at Kemmindine, a village three miles above Rangoon, on an elevated situation, with a thick forest in its rear. They were intended perhaps to act also as spies, and report upon the condition and spirits of the British army. Whatever was their object nothing satisfactory was proposed by them in the interview they had with our commissioners. Determined to convince the Birmese that we were not to be lulled into a treacherous security, our Commander, on the morning of the day after their departure, (10th June), ordered a general advance upon Kemmindine. The road was not left undisputed. About half way a strong stockade ran across it, the fruitless attempt to defend which cost the enemy two hundred men. The way being cleared,

the column again moved forward, consisting of about 3000 men, and by night-fall the troops had taken their position in many places within a hundred yards of where the enemy was posted. At daybreak on the following day, firing commenced, which upon our part, in less than two hours, produced a very visible breach in their fortifications. This, together with the recollection of their discomfiture the day before, operated so powerfully on the Birmese, that notwithstanding the still existing strength of their stockade they thought proper quietly to evacuate the place during the cannonade. It was this facility of securing a retreat, assisted as they were by the chain of posts which they occupied, and the thickness of the surrounding jungle, that particularly annoyed our troops, who, just in the very moment of victory, constantly found that their enemy had slipped as it were from between their very fingers. The object, however, which Sir Archibald Campbell had in view in making this attack, was fully accomplished. A terror of the British arms began to pervade the country; and, in the course of a few days, every stockade in the immediate vicinity of Rangoon was abandoned. In this, as well as in all his other expeditions on the banks of the river, the Commander-in-chief received most effective and valuable assistance from the co-operation of the naval part of his force.

A short cessation from active hostilities took place, after the affair of Kemmindine; but both parties were preparing to renew operations with increased vigour. A reinforcement arrived at Rangoon from Madras; and the detachments which had taken possession of Cheduba and Ne-

grais, returned very seasonably to the main army, now a good deal weakened from various causes. The Birmese, on their part, were not idle. Their former generals having failed in driving "the wild foreigners into the sea," had fallen into disgrace, and were succeeded by a senior officer of some reputation, who brought with him a considerable body of fresh troops. His object was, not so much to meet the British in open fight, as to hem them in within a limited space, and harass them with a protracted system of desultory warfare. To such proceedings, it was of course not our interest quietly to submit; and accordingly, various expeditions were undertaken for the purpose of breaking through the cordon which the enemy was attempting to form round us. In one of these, ten stockades were taken in one day, and the new general, with many other chiefs of rank, were killed.

Still, however, no thoughts of peace were entertained by the Birmese; and it was now evident, that whatever successes were gained, as long as our operations were confined to the neighbourhood of Rangoon, no effect would be produced by them on the Court of Ava. Unprovided, therefore, as Sir Archibald Campbell was, with the means of advancing into the interior, he resolved to have recourse to the only other alternative left him, which was to intimidate the Birmese still further, by the capture of some of their southern maritime possessions. An expedition was fitted out for this purpose, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Miles, who, in the course of a few months, made himself master of Tavoy, Mergue, and Tenasserim, seaports of much importance on the eastern shores of the empire.

Two of the king's brothers, the princes of Tonghoo and Sarawuddy, now took the command of the army. The one fixed his head-quarters at Pegue, and the other at Donoobew, both at a considerable distance from Rangoon. Along with them came a body of astrologers, who were most probably kept in pay by the Birmese government, as useful engines by which to act on the superstition of the people; and likewise a party of troops, called the King's Invulnerables, from the belief entertained, or affected to be entertained, both by themselves and their countrymen, that the fire of an enemy could not injure them. Notwithstanding the extensive nature of their preparations, however, and the confidence they expressed in their own success, the operations of this new armament ended as disastrously as those of any which had preceded it. Instead of gaining any advantage over the British, they were invariably driven back with considerable loss, as often as they attempted to approach our encampments. Yet it is not to be denied or concealed, that the Birmese are no contemptible antagonists: they are constitutionally brave, they are trained to arms from their cradle, and there is a persevering obstinacy in their style of fighting, which, with troops less perfectly disciplined than those of England, would have every chance of being ultimately crowned with success.

But the golden-footed Monarch of Ava had found out, at length, that, however he might at first have affected to despise the small army which had taken possession of Rangoon, 600 miles distant from his capital, it was more than a match for the best generals he could send against it, followed by thousands of his favourite troops. He saw the

necessity, therefore, of collecting his energies for a yet more powerful effort. His forces, he found, were too much scattered; he was convinced that he was attempting to do too much at once. He recalled, therefore, the armies he had sent into Assam and Arracan; and, concentrating the whole military power of his kingdom, he gave the entire command to Maha Bandoola, whom we have had occasion to mention already, and whose reputation, from his partial successes over the British in Chittagong, stood exceedingly high. Bandoola, as we have already related, had advanced to Ramoo, where he was probably making preparations for an expedition into Bengal; and it is not unlikely that he found it exceedingly disagreeable to be awakened from his dream of future victory, by being recalled to defend his own country from invasion. His retreat from Ramoo, and subsequent march through Arracan, (which in the midst, as it was, of the rainy season, must have been a peculiarly arduous one), relieved the inhabitants of Calcutta from considerable anxiety; and, shortly afterwards, enabled our troops in that quarter to advance with little opposition into the very interior of Arracan, taking possession of the capital itself.

As soon as Maha Bandoola arrived at Ava, every honour and attention was conferred upon him by his sovereign; and, after a short delay in the capital, he set out for Donoobew, accompanied by a large fleet of war-boats, which carried down the river strong reinforcements of men and military stores. We were not, however, unprepared to receive these new enemies; and some overtures of a friendly nature, which we had a short time before received from the Siamese, tended to inspire

us with additional confidence. As it was now also clearly foreseen, that an advance towards the capital of the empire would be necessary before we could expect to intimidate the Birman monarch into a desire for peace, 500 native artisans had been sent to Rangoon from Chittagong, who were busily employed in preparing boats to convey our troops up the Irrawaddy. The arrival, likewise, of several battalions of British and native infantry, as well as of some troops of cavalry, added considerably to our numerical and actual force. Towards the end of November, the largest and best appointed army which the Birman government had yet sent into the field, marched down from Donoobew, and made their appearance in the neighbourhood of Rangoon, with the intention of driving us first from our position at Kemmindine, and then of forcing the scattered remains of our army to seek for safety in their ships. The name of the Commander-in-chief, Bandoola, was in itself a tower of strength; and there was not probably a Birman into whose imagination the thought ever for a moment entered, that this invincible leader could, by any possibility, be unsuccessful.

Both armies met for the first time on the 1st of December; and as the particulars of their first engagement, where so much talent was displayed on both sides, cannot fail to be read with interest, we shall make no apology for introducing in this place an extract from the London Gazette Extraordinary of April 24. 1825,—consisting of

"Copy of a Letter from Brigadier-General Sir A. Campbell, K. C. B., to George Swinton, Esq., dated Head-Quarters, Rangoon, 9th December 1824.

"Sir,—The long-threatened, and, on my part, no less anxiously wished for event, has at length taken place.

Maha Bandoola, said to be accompanied by the Princes of Tongho and Sarawuddy, appeared in front of my position on the morning of the 1st instant, at the head of the whole united force of the Birman empire, amounting, upon the most moderate calculation, to from fifty to sixty thousand men, apparently well armed, with a numerous artillery, and a body of Cassay horse. Their haughty leader had insolently declared his intention of leading us in captive chains to grace the triumph of the Golden Monarch; but it has pleased God to expose the vanity of his idle threats, and crown the heroic efforts of my gallant little army with a most complete and signal victory.

"The enemy had assembled his forces in the heavy jungle in our front, during the night of the 30th ult.; and, being well aware of his near approach, I had previously made every necessary arrangement for his reception, in whatever way he might think proper to leave his impervious camp. The absence of Lieutenant-Colonel Godwin at Martaban, and of a strong detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Mallet, which I had sent to display the British flag in the ancient capital of Pegue, had much weakened my force; but I had been too long familiar with the resolute resolution of British troops, to have felt any regret that fortune had given me an opportunity of contending with Bandoola and his formidable legions, even under circumstances of temporary disadvantage.

"Early in the morning of the 1st inst., the enemy commenced his operations by a smart attack upon our post at Kemmindine, commanded by Major Yates, and garrisoned by the 26th Madras Native Infantry, with a detachment of the Madras European Regiment, supported on the river by as strong a naval force as could be spared. As the day became light, it discovered numerous, and, apparently, formidable masses of the advancing enemy issuing from the jungle, and moving, at some distance, upon both our flanks, for the purpose of surrounding us, which I allowed them to effect without interruption, leaving us only the narrow channel of the Rangoon river unoccupied in our rear.

"Bandoola had now fully exposed to me his plan of operations, and my own resolution was instantly adopted of allowing, and even encouraging him to bring forth his means and resources from the jungle to the more open

country on his left, where I knew I could at any time attend him to advantage.

"The right corps of the Birmese army had crossed to the Dallah side of the Rangoon river, and in the course of the morning was observed in several divisions crossing the plain towards the site of the ruined village of Dalla, where it took post in the neighbouring jungle, sending on a division to occupy the almost inaccessible ground on the bank of the river, and from which they soon opened a distant fire upon the shipping. Another division immediately took ground in front of Kemmindine, and for six successive days tried in vain every effort that hope of success and dread of failure could call forth, to drive the brave 26th and a handful of Europeans from this post, while tremendous fire-rafts, and crowds of war-boats, were every day employed in the equally vain endeavour to drive the shipping from their station off the place.

"The enemy's right wing and centre occupied a range of hills immediately in front of the great Dagon pagoda, covered with so thick a forest as to be impenetrable to all but Birman troops, and their left extended nearly two miles further, along a lower and more open ridge to the village of Puzendoon, where their extreme left rested. They were no sooner thus placed in position, than muskets and spears were laid aside for the pick-axe and shovel, and in an incredibly short space of time every part of their line out of the jungle was strongly and judiciously entrenched.

"In the afternoon of the 1st, I observed an opportunity of attacking the enemy's left to advantage, and ordered Major Sale, with 400 men from the 13th Light Infantry, and 18th Madras Native Infantry, under Major Dennie of the former, and Captain Ross of the latter corps, to move forward to the point I had selected, and I never witnessed a more dashing charge than was made on this occasion by his Majesty's 13th, while the 18th Native Infantry followed their example with a spirit that did them honour, carrying all opposition before them. They burst through the entrenchments, carrying dismay and terror into the enemy's ranks, great numbers of whom were slain, and the party returned loaded with arms, standards, and other trophies. Having correctly ascertained every thing I required, I now, as I originally determined, abstained

from giving any serious interruption to the indefatigable labour of the opposing army, patiently waiting until I saw the whole of their material fully brought forward and within my reach. About sunset in the evening, a cloud of skirmishers were pushed forward close under the north-east angle of the pagoda, who, taking advantage of the many pagodas and strong ground on our front, commenced a harassing and galling fire upon the works. I at once saw we should suffer from their fire, if not dislodged, therefore ordered two companies of the 38th regiment, under Captain Piper (an officer I have often had occasion to mention), to advance and drive them back. Were it permitted, on such an occasion, to dwell upon the enthusiastic spirit of my troops, I would feel a pleasure in recounting the burst of rapture that followed every order to advance against their audacious foe; but it is sufficient to remark, that the conduct of these two companies was most conspicuous. They quickly gained their point, and fully acted up to the character they have ever sustained. At daylight, on the morning of the 2d, finding the enemy had very much encroached during the night, and had entrenched a height in front of the north gate of the pagoda, which gave them an enfilading fire upon part of our line, I directed Captain Wilson, of the 38th regiment, with two companies of that corps, and one hundred men of the 28th Madras Native Infantry, to drive them from the hill. No order was ever more rapidly or handsomely obeyed. The brave Sepoys, vying with their British comrades in forward gallantry, allowed the appalled Birmese no time to rally, but drove them from one breast-work to another, fighting them in the very holes they had dug finally to prove their graves.

"In the course of this day, Colonel Mallett's detachment returned from Pegue, having found the old city completely deserted, and gave me the additional means of attacking the enemy the moment the time arrived.

"During the 3d and 4th, the enemy carried on his labours with indefatigable industry; and but for the inimitable practice of our artillery, commanded by Captain Murray, in the absence, from indisposition, of Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, we must have been severely annoyed by the incessant fire from his trenches.

"The attacks upon Kemmindine continued with unabating violence; but the unyielding spirit of Major Yates

and his steady troops, although exhausted with fatigue and want of rest, baffled every attempt on shore; while Captain Ryves, with his Majesty's sloop Sophia, the Honourable Company's cruizer Teignmouth, and some flotilla and row gun-boats, nobly maintained the long-established fame of the British navy, in defending the passage of the river against the most furious assaults of the enemy's war-boats, advancing under cover of the most tremendous fire-rafts, which the unwearied exertions of British sailors could alone have conquered.

"Captain Ryves lost no opportunity of coming in contact with the much vaunted boats of Ava; and in one morning, five out of six, each mounting a heavy piece of ordnance, were boarded and captured by our men-of-war's boats, commanded by Lieutenant Kellett of his Majesty's ship Arachne, and Lieutenant Goldfinch of the Sophia, whose intrepid conduct merits the highest praise.

"The enemy having apparently completed his left wing with its full complement of artillery and warlike stores, I determined to attack that part of his line early on the morning of the 5th. I requested Captain Chadds, the senior naval officer here, to move up to the Puzendoon creek during the night, with the gun-flotilla, bomb-ketch, &c. and commence a cannonade on the enemy's rear at daylight. This service was most judiciously and successfully performed by that officer, who has never yet disappointed me in my most sanguine expectations. At the same time, two columns of attack were formed, agreeably to orders I had issued on the preceding evening, composed of details from the different regiments of the army. The first, consisting of 1100 men, I placed under the orders of that gallant officer, Major Sale, and directed him to attack and penetrate the centre of the enemy's line; the other, consisting of 600 men, I intrusted to Major Walker, of the 3d Madras Native Light Infantry, with orders to attack their left, which had approached to within a few hundred yards of Rangoon. At seven o'clock, both columns moved forward to the point of attack; both were led to my perfect satisfaction; and both succeeded with a degree of ease, their intrepid and undaunted conduct undoubtedly insured; and I directed Lieutenant Archibald, with a troop of the Governor-general's body guard, which had been landed the preceding evening, to

follow the column under Major Sale, and take advantage of any opportunity which might offer, to charge.

" The enemy were defeated and dispersed in every direction; and the body guard, gallantly charging over the broken and swampy ground, completed their terror and dismay. The Cassay horse fled, mixed with the retreating infantry; and all their artillery, stores, and reserve depots, which had cost them so much toil and labour to get up, with a great quantity of small arms, gilt shatahs, standards, and other trophies, fell into our hands. Never was victory more complete or more decided; and never was the triumph of discipline and valour, over the disjointed efforts of irregular courage, and infinitely superior numbers, more conspicuous. Majors Dennie and Thornhill, of the 13th Light Infantry, and Major Gore of the 89th, were distinguished by the steadiness with which they led their men; but it is with deep regret I have to state, the loss we have sustained, in the death of Major Walker, one of India's best and bravest soldiers, who fell while leading his column into the enemy's entrenchments; when the command devolved upon Major Wahab, who gallantly conducted the column during the rest of the action; and I observed the 34th Madras Native Light Infantry, on this occasion, conspicuously forward.

" The Birmese left wing thus disposed of, I patiently waited its effect upon the right, posted in so thick a forest as to render any attack in that quarter in a great measure impracticable.

" On the 6th I had the pleasure of observing that Bandoola had brought up the scattered remnant of his defeated left to strengthen his right and centre, and continued day and night employed in carrying on his approaches in front of the great pagoda. I ordered the artillery to slacken its fire, and the infantry to keep wholly out of sight, allowing him to carry on his fruitless labour with little annoyance or molestation. As I expected, he took system for timidity; and on the morning of the 7th instant, I had his whole force posted in my immediate front—his first line entrenched so close, that the soldiers in their barracks could distinctly hear the insolent threats and reproaches of the Birman bravoes.

" The time had now arrived to undeceive them in their sanguine, but ill-founded hopes. I instantly made my arrangements, and at half past eleven o'clock every thing

was in readiness to assault the trenches in four columns of attack, under the superintendance of Lieutenant-Colonel Miles, my second in command, and commanded by Lieutenant-Colonels Mallet, Parlby, Brodie, and Captain Wilson of the 38th Regiment. At a quarter before twelve I ordered every gun that would bear upon the trenches to open, and their fire was kept up with an effect that never was surpassed; Major Sale at the same time, as directed, making a diversion on the enemy's left and rear. At twelve o'clock the cannonade ceased, and the columns moved forward to their respective points of attack. Every thing was done under my own immediate eye, but where all behaved so nobly, I cannot particularize; but I must in justice state, that Captain Wilson's and Lieutenant-Colonel Parlby's divisions first made an impression, from which the enemy never recovered. They were driven from all their works without a check, abandoning all their guns, with a great quantity of arms of every description; and certainly not the least amusing part of their formidable preparations was a great number of ladders for escalading the Great Pagoda, found in rear of their position. The total defeat of Bandoola's army was now most fully accomplished. His loss, in killed and wounded, from the nature of the ground, it is impossible to calculate; but I am confident I do not exceed the fairest limit, when I state it at 5000 men. In every other respect the mighty host, which so lately threatened to overwhelm us, now scarcely exists. It commenced its inglorious flight during last night. Humbled, dispersing, and deprived of their arms, they cannot, for a length of time, again meet us in the field, and the lesson they have now received will, I am confident, prove a salutary antidote to the native arrogance and vanity of the Birmese nation. Thus vanished the hopes of Ava: and those means which the Birmese government were seven months in organizing for our annihilation, have been completely destroyed by us in the course of seven days. Of 300 pieces of ordnance that accompanied the grand army, 240 are now in our camp, and in muskets their loss is to them irreparable.

"Our loss in killed and wounded, although severe, will not, I am sure, be considered great for the important services we have had the honour to perform.

"Of my troops I cannot say enough; their valour was

only equalled by the cheerful patience with which they bore long and painful privations. My Europeans fought like Britons, and proved themselves worthy of the country that gave them birth; and, I trust, I do the gallant sepoys justice when I say, that never did troops more strive to obtain the palm of honour, than they to rival their European comrades in every thing that marks the steady, true, and daring soldier.

"My obligations to Captains Chadds and Ryves, and the officers and seamen of his Majesty's navy, are great and numerous. In Captain Chadds himself I have always found that ready alacrity to share our toils and dangers, that has ever characterized the profession he belongs to; and the most cordial zeal in assisting and co-operating with me on every occasion. I have also to notice the good conduct of the Honourable Company's cruizers, the gun-flotilla, and row-boats; nor ought I to omit mentioning the handsome conduct of Captain Binny, acting agent for the Bengal transports, in volunteering both his European crew and ship for any service. On the present occasion she was anchored off Dall, and sustained some loss from the enemy's fire. I may also add, that every transport in the river was equally anxious to contribute every possible assistance to the public service."

Notwithstanding the defeat, so unexpected on his part, which Bandoola thus sustained, not many days elapsed before that indefatigable leader succeeded in rallying his scattered forces, and with a body of about 25,000 men returned to within three miles of the Pagoda alluded to in Sir Archibald Campbell's despatch, and "commenced entrenching and stockading," in the words of that General, "with a judgment in point of position such as would do credit to the best instructed engineers of the most civilized and warlike nations." This position, however, Sir Archibald determined to attack on the 15th of December; and from the admirable manner in which the fire of the artillery was directed, in less than fifteen minutes the columns destined for carrying the breach were in pos-

session, not only of the enemy's work, but of his camp, which was left standing, with all the baggage, and a great proportion of his arms and ammunition. "When it is known," says the Commander-in-chief, "that 1300 British infantry stormed and carried by assault the most formidable entrenched and stockaded works I ever saw, defended by upwards of 20,000 men, I trust it is unnecessary for me to say more in praise of soldiers performing such a prodigy; future ages will scarcely believe it." It is proper, however, to mention, that upon this occasion Bandoola did not command in person; the chief to whom he had intrusted that duty was mortally wounded whilst gallantly defending the stockade.

On the same day on which this very brilliant action took place, under the superintendance of Captain Chadds, the senior naval officer at Rangoon, an attack was made upon a fleet of thirty-two of the enemy's war-boats. Of these, principally through the aid of the Diana steam-boat, which accompanied this expedition, and the celerity of whose motions, even against wind and tide, inspired the Birmese with the greatest consternation, thirty were captured, having been previously abandoned by their crews, who, upon the approach of the steam-boat, threw themselves into the river, and were either drowned or swam ashore, apparently in an agony of terror. In consequence of these continued disasters, Maha Bandoola found it necessary to lead back his army much shattered to Donoobew.

It was now for the first time that the British army at Rangoon found itself in undisturbed possession of a considerable district of country, and

active preparations were immediately made for taking every advantage of this new situation of affairs. Orders were issued to prepare for a speedy advance into the interior; and besides the continual arrival of transports from the Presidencies, this object was not a little favoured by the return of many of the inhabitants of the country to their former places of residence in Rangoon and its vicinity, and by their consenting to open a regular traffic with the British in all articles of consumption. Some of the native watermen too volunteered into our service, by whose assistance we were enabled to obviate many of the difficulties which our ignorance of the navigation of the Irrawaddy would otherwise have occasioned.

Certainly at this moment the situation of the Birmese monarch was any thing but enviable. The most numerous armies, headed by the most skilful generals he could send into the field, had been defeated again and again. The victorious troops at Rangoon were about to march for Ava; from the north-east frontier of Arracan a large force under Brigadier-general Morison was preparing to enter his empire, and if possible to co-operate with Sir Archibald Campbell's division; from Sylhet, another army under Brigadier-general Shouldham, threatened to advance to the capital through Cassay; in Assam, Lieutenant-colonel Richards was busy with a small but active corps; and on the south, the Siamese, who had already manifested their friendly dispositions towards the British, held out hopes of their making a movement in conjunction with our columns, which were to march up the Irrawaddy. His celestial Majesty, however, is not easily terrified, or, if he is, he has too much

pride to show it. Upon the present occasion he boldly stood at bay, and manfully prepared for resistance at whatever cost.

It was on the 13th of February 1825 that the general advance of the British troops commenced. They were divided into two columns; the one about 2000 strong, proceeding by land, under the command of Sir Archibald Campbell; and the other by water, under Brigadier-general Cotton, consisted of about 1000 European infantry, with a powerful train of artillery, which was embarked in a flotilla of sixty boats, commanded by Captain Alexander. The land column was to proceed, in the first place, up the Lain river, and effect a junction with Brigadier Cotton as near Donoobew as possible. A smaller force under Major Sale was also ordered to take possession of Bassein, after which it likewise was to join the main body at Donoobew. Brigadier M'Reagh, with the remainder of the troops, was left in command at Rangoon, and was to employ himself in superintending the fortification of that town, which went on briskly.

The land force under General Campbell marched to Lain, without meeting with any resistance whatever. Its distance from Rangoon is about fifty miles; but, owing to the uncultivated state of the country, and the absence of every thing like regular roads, the troops, though in high health and spirits, could seldom advance more than eight miles a day. They left Rangoon on the 14th, and did not reach Lain till the 23d of February. The town, though the capital of a pretty extensive district, was found quite deserted, and a halt was made at it for only a single night; after which, the column

resumed its march towards Donoobew with all possible expedition. By the 7th of March, it was near enough that place to hear distinctly the sound of a cannonade, which the marine division under General Cotton, having arrived first, had already opened upon it. The operations of this division, in passing up the Irrawaddy, had necessarily been much more arduous than those of the land column. Various stockades and entrenchments had been thrown up upon the banks to oppose its progress. At Paulang, in particular, a very spirited affair took place, where between four and five thousand Birmese were driven back from very powerful fortifications with considerable loss. Upon this and other similar occasions, the shells and rockets used by the British were found of the greatest service, both as tending to throw the enemy into confusion, and to save the lives of our men. After these successes, Brigadier-General Cotton proceeded direct to Donoobew; and though Sir Archibald Campbell had not yet come up, he determined upon attacking the enemy, who, headed by Bandoola, mustered about 15,000 strong, and had fortified their position in the most skilful and soldier-like manner. An outer stockade, which our marine force first attacked, was carried with a loss to the enemy of about 400 men. The attempt made upon the second stockade was less successful; and, after being exposed for a considerable time to a heavy fire, General Cotton found it necessary to re-embark the troops he had landed for the purpose of making the assault, and dropped down four miles below Donoobew, there to wait until reinforced. Our loss in this second affair was serious.

In the mean while, Sir Archibald Campbell, not

altogether aware of the formidable resistance which was to be made at Donoobew, had pushed on several days' march towards Prome, a city of some magnitude, and which he understood was the headquarters of the enemy. On the 11th of March, he received despatches informing him of the failure of the attack upon the outworks at the former place, and, after some deliberation, he judged it proper to retrace his steps to the assistance of General Cotton. On the 14th, and four following days, his troops were employed in crossing the Irrawaddy, which it was necessary to do before they could reach Donoobew. The task was one of no slight difficulty; but, in the words of Major Snodgrass, " energy and perseverance, aided by the cheerful and hearty exertions of the soldiers, finally triumphed over every obstacle." It was not, however, till the 25th, that the army arrived within gun-shot distance of Donoobew.

The main stockade, at the fort of Donoobew, was upwards of a mile in length, composed of solid teak beams, from 15 to 17 feet high, and from 5 to 8 hundred yards broad. Behind this were the brick ramparts of the place, surmounted by about 150 guns. The whole was surrounded by a large deep ditch filled with spikes, nails, and holes; and the ditch itself was shut in with several rows of strong railing, together with an abatis of great breadth. Our camp was hardly pitched, before a sortie was made from the fort, which, though of a formidable appearance at first, ended in smoke. For several days skirmishes of a desultory kind took place before the works, without producing any serious impression on either side. On the first of April, a continued fire of rockets was kept up

upon our part, with little or no return from the enemy, a circumstance which occasioned some surprise. The cause, however, was satisfactorily enough explained next day. The fort of Donoobew was nearly evacuated, for on the morning of the first, Maha Bandoola, while going his rounds, had been killed on the spot by a rocket; and such was the panic which instantly took possession of the garrison, that the surviving chiefs found it utterly impossible to keep it any longer together. Just as the enemy's rear guard fled towards the neighbouring jungle on the 2d, our army took possession of the place, and found in it a great store not only of guns and ammunition, but of grain sufficient for many months consumption.

The death of Maha Bandoola was probably the greatest misfortune which the Birman monarch had yet sustained. There can be little doubt that he possessed talents of no mean order, and the respect, approaching to awe, which he inspired in his soldiers, made them a great deal more formidable when under his command than that of any one else. One of the prisoners found in the fort related the particulars of his General's death in these words: "I belong to the household of Menghi Maha Bandoola, and my business was to beat the great drums that are hanging in the veranda of the Wongee's house. Yesterday morning, between the hours of nine and ten, while the chief's dinner was preparing, he went out to take his usual morning walk round the works, and arrived at his observatory, (that tower with a red ball upon it), where, as there was no firing, he sat down upon a couch which was kept there for his use. While he was giving orders to some of his chiefs, the

English began throwing bombs, and one of them falling close to the General, burst, and killed him on the spot. His body was immediately carried away and burnt to ashes. His death was soon known to every body in the stockade, and the soldiers refused to stay and fight under any other commander. The chiefs lost all influence over their men, every individual thinking only of providing for his own personal safety."

With as little delay as possible the British force now pushed on to Prome, well aware that decisive measures alone would produce any effect on the Court of Ava. No interruption of a hostile nature was attempted to be made; but letters were received, in the course of the march, from the Birmese authorities at Prome, intimating the willingness of the government to conclude a peace. As it was suspected, however, that this was merely a stratagem for the sake of gaining time, Sir Archibald Campbell replied, that as soon as he had taken military possession of Prome, he would be happy to listen to any overtures of an amicable nature which might be made to him. The prudence of this determination was very clearly perceived when the army arrived before that city, where every preparation was making for a vigorous defence. The celerity of our motions, however, was too much for the enemy, who, being taken by surprise before their fortifications were completed, retired during the night of the 24th of April, and, on the 25th General Campbell entered the place without firing a shot.

As the rainy season was about to set in, and the campaign therefore necessarily near a close,

our head-quarters were fixed at Prome, from whence a detachment marched, during May, towards Tonghoo, taking possession of the intermediate country, and returning about the end of May to Prome. The Prince of Sarrawuddy, who now headed the remnant of the Birmese army, fell back upon Melloone, and busied himself in raising recruits, to the number of about 30,000, for the ensuing campaign.

During the stay of the British army at Prome, every thing was done to conciliate the good will and secure the confidence of such of its native inhabitants as returned to it. The consequences were particularly happy. The tide of population flowed back; and not only at Prome, but in all the towns and districts which had been already passed, an active and cheerful people returned to live in unmolested quiet, perfectly satisfied of the good faith and honesty of their invaders. In fact, the whole of Pegue, as well as a considerable portion of Ava Proper, may be considered as having, at this time, been under the jurisdiction of the British. We had certainly conquered the country so far; and, without attempting any material alteration of their ordinary modes of civil government, we found it necessary to supply the place of their magistrates and other creatures of the crown, who had for the most part absconded, by organizing a system of official authority, to which we gave the sanction of our approval and assistance. Into the details of these arrangements it is unnecessary here to enter. It is sufficient to say that they were at once simple and effective; and reflect no small credit on our Commander-in-chief and his advisers.

The resources of the Court of Ava, great as their efforts had already been, were yet far from being exhausted. During the period in which there was a necessary cessation of hostilities, a new army was organized, amounting to 70,000 men, and all thoughts of peace appeared to be laid aside. It was the earnest desire, however, of our Commander-in-chief, to avoid, if possible, the shedding of more blood; and, in the beginning of October, he despatched a letter to the Birmese head-quarters, urging strongly upon their chiefs the propriety of advising their sovereign to listen to the lenient terms of peace he proposed. In consequence of this letter, a meeting took place at Neoun-Ben-Zeik, between Commissioners appointed on both sides; but after much useless conversation, prolonged to a ridiculous length by the Birmese, it was found impossible to prevail upon them to agree to the proposals we made; and soon after the Birmese commissioners had returned to head-quarters, the army advanced in battle array to the very gates of Prome, its General having previously honoured Sir Archibald Campbell with the following laconic epistle:—"If you wish for peace, you may go away; but if you ask either money or territory, no friendship can exist between us. This is Birman custom."—It was not long before "Birman custom" underwent a change.

To oppose the formidable force which now threatened to shut us in, and bury us among the ruins of Prome, we were able to muster an army of only 5000 men, of whom only 3000 were British. It seemed to be the wish of the Birmese leaders not to risk a general engagement, but to

proceed by the slower, though perhaps more certain method of blockade. As soon as these intentions were discovered, it was resolved to attack the enemy at once, without allowing him more time for strengthening his position. On the 1st of December, our marine and land forces advanced at the same moment; and, after a well contested fight of some hours, the Birmese were driven back, with much slaughter, to a stockade they had erected some miles distant on the heights of Napadee. It was remarked, as a curious feature of this engagement, that three young and handsome women, evidently of high rank, fought with the most persevering obstinacy and courage among the ranks of the Birmese, recalling to the recollection of our officers all they had ever read of the Amazons of earlier ages. It was believed that at least two of these ladies perished in the field. The Birmese General, Maha Nemiow, and many of the Chobwas, or tributary princes, who had grown grey in the service of their sovereign, also lost their lives on this day. But, after all, our troops had only achieved half of what it was necessary for them to do. Until the enemy was driven from his formidable position at Napadee, we could not congratulate ourselves on having gained any decisive victory. On the second of December, therefore, and the four following days, the army was employed in probably the most arduous duty it had yet undertaken,—that of forcing the heights of Napadee. They were fortified with unexampled strength, although the natural obstacles they presented made artificial means of defence almost unnecessary. All things considered, we do not think we can be accused of giving way to national vanity

when we assert, that none but British soldiers powerfully assisted by a flotilla commanded by British sailors, could have succeeded in steadily advancing from one stockade to another, under the continued volleys of the Birmese, and in driving, at the point of the bayonet, without returning a shot, their opponents from a position three miles in extent. On the 5th, the victory was complete. Every division of the Birmese army, and there were several, had been beaten in succession; and, completely disheartened, the fugitives dispersed themselves in all directions, wherever the woods or the jungles seemed to offer concealment.

It was now determined to lose no time in advancing to Ava itself, which is about three hundred miles distant ftom Prome; and on the 9th of December the march was commenced. On the 29th our army reached Melloone, about half-way between Ava and Prome, having seen nothing on the way but a deserted country, covered with the wounded, the dead, and the dying. The Birmese monarch was at last awakened to something like a becoming knowledge of the situation in which he stood; and at Melloone, a flag of truce was sent to meet us, and to intimate the arrival of a commissioner from Ava, with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace. That this was really the case, was attested by the amicable conduct of the enemy's troops who were assembled at Melloone. Our army, therefore, halted on the opposite side of the river, and a barge was moored in the middle, where the first meeting with the new delegate was to take place. On the 1st of January, the commissioners of both nations met. The demand

made upon our part of a crore of rupees, as well as of the cession of Arracan, and the restoration of Cassay, was what principally startled the Birmese commissioners; but, at length, finding it impossible to make us alter our terms, the treaty was agreed to and signed, fifteen days being allowed for obtaining the ratification of the King. At the expiration of that period, it was communicated to us from Melloone, that no answer had yet been received from Ava, and a further delay of some six or eight days was requested. But as this must evidently have been a preconcerted scheme, suspicions were roused of the sincerity of that designing court, and Sir Archibald Campbell gave the Birmese the choice of only two alternatives, either to evacuate Melloone, and allow him to take possession of it, in which case he would remain quiet for a short time longer, or to prepare for an assault, which he would make upon it that very night. The Birmese, with much courage, instantly prepared for their defence. Though not inferior in bravery, however, the military tactics of the Birmese will not for a moment bear any comparison with ours. Early on the 19th January 1826, the British standard was erected on the walls of Melloone, 15,000 men having been driven out of the town by, comparatively, a mere handful. In the house of Prince Memiaboo, a half-brother of the King, who had taken the command, was found money to the amount of from 30 to 40,000 rupees; and what was still more surprising, though perhaps not quite so agreeable, both the English and Birmese copies of the treaty lately made, signed and sealed as they had been at the meeting, and bearing, consequently, undeniable evidence of their never having

been perused by the King. "It is no easy matter," says an officer from whose work we have already quoted, "to divine what object the Court of Ava could have had in view in opening negotiations they had no intention of abiding by, or what possible result they could have anticipated from a short and profitless delay, which to us was in every point of view desirable, as much to allow the men to recover from the debilitating effects of their late fatigue, as to afford time for collecting cattle from the interior, and sufficient supplies of every description for prosecuting our journey along a sacked and plundered line of country."—"Memiaboo and his beaten army," adds Major Snodgrass, "retired from the scene of their disasters with all possible haste, and the British Commander prepared to follow him up without delay. Before, however, commencing his march, he despatched a messenger with the unratified treaty to the Kee Wongee, as well to show the Birmese chiefs that their perfidy was discovered, as to give them the means of still performing their engagements;—but merely telling the latter in his note, that, in the hurry of departure from Melloone, he had forgotten a document which he might now find more useful and acceptable to his government than they had a few days previously considered it. The Wongee and his colleague politely returned their best thanks for the paper; but observed, that the same hurry that had caused the loss of the treaty, had compelled them to leave behind a large sum of money, which they also much regretted, and which they were sure the British General only waited an opportunity of returning."

Our army now resumed its march upon Ava.

On the 31st of January, it was met by a Doctor Price, an American missionary, and an Englishman of the name of Sandford, assistant surgeon of the Royal Regiment (who had been taken prisoner some months before), and who were now sent on their parole of honour to communicate the sincere desire which his celestial Majesty at last entertained for peace, and to ascertain the lowest terms upon which it would be granted. The terms offered at Melloone were renewed, and the British general having promised not to advance for twelve days nearer their capital than Pagahm-mew, the two delegates returned to Ava. There can be little doubt that the Birmese monarch now saw the necessity for peace, and was therefore anxious to secure it; but the terms proposed, lenient as they were, he found dreadfully galling to his pride. At all hazards, therefore, he resolved upon one effort more, and if that failed, peace was to be immediately concluded. On the fall of Melloone, he made an appeal to the patriotism and generosity of his subjects. He represented himself as tottering on his throne, and the immortal dominion of Ava as about to pass away into the hands of strangers. To the troops which he now collected, to the amount of about 40,000 men, he gave the honourable appellation of "Retrievers of the King's Glory;" and a warrior, bearing the formidable titles of "Prince of the Setting Sun," "Prince of Darkness," and "King of Hell," was intrusted with the command of this force. He took his position at Pegahm-mew, where he was attacked by the British on the 9th of March. The result was the same as had attended all our engagements with the Birmese. We took possession of the

place, and the "Retrievers of the King's Glory" fled in detached parties over the country. The unfortunate "Prince of the Setting Sun" ventured to return to Ava after his defeat, where he was immediately put to death by order of the king.

Peace was now inevitable, unless it had been resolved to allow Ava itself to fall into our hands. The army, which continued to advance, was met only 45 miles from that city by Dr Price and Mr Sandford, accompanied by two ministers of state and all the British prisoners who had been taken during the war, and bringing the first instalment of the money payment (25 lacs of rupees), as well as an authority under the sign-manual, to accept of such terms of peace as we might propose. These were finally settled and signed on the 24th of February 1826. This important Treaty of Peace between the Honourable East India Company on the one part, and his Majesty the King of Ava on the other, consisted of the following Articles, to which we have much pleasure in giving a place in this work.

"Art I.—There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable Company on the one part, and the King of Ava on the other.

"Art. II.—His Majesty the King of Ava renounces all claims, and will abstain from all future interference with the principality of Assam and its dependencies, and also with the contiguous petty states of Cachar and Jynteea. With regard to Munnipore, it is stipulated, that, should Ghumbeer Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as Rajah thereof.

"Art. III.—To prevent all future disputes respecting the boundary between the two great nations, the British Government will retain the conquered provinces of Arracan, including the four divisions of Arracan, Ramree, Cheduba, and Sandoway, and his majesty the King of

Ava cedes all right thereto. The Unnoupectowmien, or Arracan mountains (known in Arracan by the name of Yeomatoung, or Pokhingloung range), will henceforth form the boundary between the two great nations on that side. Any doubts regarding the said line of demarcation, will be settled by the commissioners appointed by the respective governments for that purpose, such commissioners from both powers to be suitable and cerresponding in rank.

"Art. IV.—His Majesty, the King of Ava, cedes to the British Government the conquered provinces of Yeh, Tavoy, and Mergui and Tenasserim, with the islands and dependencies thereunto appertaining, taking the Saluoen river as the line of demarcation on that frontier. Any doubts regarding their boundaries will be settled as specified in the concluding part of Art. III.

"Art. V.—In proof of the sincere disposition of the Birman Government to maintain the relations of peace and amity between the nations, and as part indemnification to the British Government for the expenses of the war, his majesty, the King of Ava, agrees to pay the sum of one crore of rupees.

"Art. VI.—No person whatever, whether native or foreigner, is hereafter to be molested by either party, on account of the part which he may have taken, or have been compelled to take, in the present war.

"Art. VII.—In order to cultivate and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two Governments, it is agreed, that accredited ministers, retaining an escort, or safeguard of fifty men from each, shall reside at the durbar of the other, who shall be permitted to purchase, or to build a suitable place of residence, of permanent materials; and a commercial treaty, upon principles of reciprocal advantage, will be entered into, by the two high contracting powers.

"Art. VIII.—All public and private debts contracted by either government, or by the subjects of either government, with the others previous to the war, to be recognised and liquidated, upon the same principles of honour and good faith, as if hostilities had not taken place between the two nations; and no advantage shall be taken by either party, of the period that may have elapsed since the debts were incurred, or in consequence of the war; and according to the universal law of nations, it is fur-

ther stipulated, that the property of all British subjects who may die in the dominions of his majesty, the king of Ava, shall, in the absence of legal heirs, be placed in the hands of the British resident or Consul in the said dominions, who will dispose of the same according to the tenor of the British law. In like manner, the property of Birmese subjects, dying under the same circumstances, in any part of the British dominions, shall be made over to the minister or other authority delegated by his Birman majesty, to the supreme government of India.

" Art. IX.—The king of Ava will abolish all exactions upon British ships or vessels in Birman ports, that are not required for Birman ships or vessels in British ports; nor shall ships or vessels, the property of British subjects, whether European or Indian, entering the Rangoon river, or other Birman ports, be required to land their guns, or unship their rudders, or to do any other act not required by Birmese ships or vessels in British ports.

" Art. X.—The good and faithful ally of the British Government, his majesty the King of Siam, having taken a part in the present war, will, to the fullest extent, as far as regards his majesty and his subjects, be included in the above treaty.

" Art. XI.—This treaty to be ratified by the Birmese authorities competent in the like cases, and the ratification to be accompanied by all British, whether European or native, American and other prisoners, who will be delivered over to the British commissioners; the British commissioners, on their part, engaging that the said treaty shall be ratified by the Right Honourable the Governor-general in council, and the ratification shall be delivered to his majesty the King of Ava, in four months, or sooner if possible; and all the Birmese prisoners shall, in like manner, be delivered over to their own government, as soon as they arrive from Bengal.

(Signed)
LARGEEN MIONGA,
Woongee, L. S.
*Seal of the Lotoo.*
(Signed)
SHWAGUIN WOON,
Atawoon, L. S.

(Signed)
A. CAMPBELL, Major-General and Senior Commissioner.
(Signed)
T. C. ROBERTSON, Civil Commissioner, L. S.
(Signed)
H. D. CHADDS, Capt. R. N.

"Additional Article.—The British commissioners being most anxiously desirous to manifest the sincerity of their wish for peace, and to make the immediate execution of the fifth article of this treaty as little irksome or inconvenient as possible to his Majesty the King of Ava, consent to the following arrangements with respect to the division of the sum total, as specified in the article before referred to, into instalments, viz. upon the payment of 25 lacs of rupees, or one-fourth of the sum total, (the other articles of the treaty being executed), the army will retire to Rangoon. Upon the further payment of a similar sum, at that place, within one hundred days from this date, with the proviso as above, the army will evacuate the dominions of his majesty the King of Ava with the least possible delay, leaving the remaining moiety of the sum total to be paid by equal annual instalments in two years, from this 24th day of February 1826, A. D.,—through the Consul or Resident in Ava or Pegue, on the part of the Honourable East India Company.

(Signed)
LARGEEN MIONGA,
Woongee, L. S,
*Seal of the Lotoo.*

(Signed)
SHWAGUIN WOON,
Atawoon, L. S.

(Signed)
A. CAMPBELL, Major-General and Senior Commissioner.

(Signed)
T. C. ROBERTSON, Civil Commissioner, L.S.
H. D. CHADS, Capt. R. N.

Thus concluded a war of a more serious and extensive nature than any in which our Indian government had been engaged for a long period. The cool perseverance and intrepidity with which so small a force as that commanded by Sir Archibald Campbell marched far into the interior of a hostile country, overcoming in its progress thousands, not of rude barbarians, but of well-disciplined and most courageous soldiers, cannot certainly be sufficiently admired, and offers a subject of proud reflection for the historian of British valour. Ava itself, the golden capital of the "Lord of Earth

and Air," would have been, had we so chosen, an easy prey to our victorious arms; but as our object was not so much to conquer a country as to teach a lesson of humility to a haughty people, and as the capture of a city which the Birmese venerate so highly might only have served to exasperate their feelings, and induce them to protract the war at any risk, it showed at once sound judgment and self-denial to abstain from proceeding to this last extremity, though we were within four days march of Ava. All that it was necessary for us to do, was done. The cession of Arracan, in particular, gives to our Indian territories on that frontier a security from hostile invasion, which they never before possessed; whilst the footing upon which our commercial relations with the Birmese empire have been placed, are of such a nature as to afford us advantages of the most important kind. Besides, the benefits derived from this war are not likely to be of a temporary nature. The eyes of the court of Ava must now be opened to the vast superiority of the British nation in point of military power; and whatever tone it may still affect to assume in conformity with the national policy of most Eastern states which affects to treat every thing foreign with contempt, it will long continue to remember, with emotions of salutary fear, the defeat of its bravest and most numerous armies at Rangoon, Donoobew, at Prome, at Melloone, and at Pegamue.

In concluding this page of British history, it is particularly gratifying to be able to record, not only the brilliant actions of our brave soldiers, but the well-won gratitude of their fellow-countrymen. On the 8th of May 1827, Mr C. W. Wynn moved

in the House of Commons, and on the 14th Lord Goderich in the Lords, that the thanks of each House be given to the officers and men engaged in the late glorious successes in India. The thanks of the British Parliament have always been received as one of the best rewards which could be bestowed for services performed to the country; and certainly they were never given with the more hearty concurrence of the whole nation, than upon the present occasion.

HAVING, in the preceding pages, endeavoured to give as distinct a narrative as our space would admit, of the late important transactions which have taken place between this country and Birmah, it is now our wish to present our readers with such additional information regarding the Birmese empire and national character, as we may have been able to collect from various sources, and as we feel confident will not be perused without interest. We are necessarily obliged to condense our facts as much as possible; but they will not be the less deserving of attention on that account.

Aware as we now are of the great internal resources of Birmah, its external or natural advantages must be no less obvious to every one who casts his eye over the map of those countries that surround the Bay of Bengal. Our territories, which lie on the north and the west, are at once discovered to be greatly inferior in most of the topographical requisites of a commercial and maritime country; whilst, from the river Naaf on the Chittagong frontier, following the line of coast southwards as far as Tenasserim, are many commodious and safe harbours, even excluding those of Bassein and Rangoon, which are probably surpassed by none in the world. It is true, that the Birmese, either through ignorance or inactivity, have not derived that benefit which it was in their power to have done from these circumstances; but this is probably only the more favourable for us, as it would induce them the more willingly to permit our merchants to establish upon the best footing a connexion for the purposes of trade and traffic with the ports alluded to. Neither ought it to be forgotten how fatal an influence

it might have on our Eastern possessions, were any other European power hostile to us to obtain the command of any of those ports, and shut them against us. The fertility of Bengal, we already know from experience, is far from being beyond the influence of the seasons; but if our settlements be maintained on the Birmese coast, the luxuriant and almost spontaneous productions of that empire would ever be to British India a certain resource against the calamities of famine.

Anxious therefore that nothing of consequence should remain unknown concerning a country to which we have of late been accustomed to look with so much interest, and with which our commercial and political relations are probably destined soon to be of a much more extensive and definite kind, we shall, in the sequel, without further introduction, arrange our remarks under the six different heads of Statistical details of the Birmese empire,—Peculiarities of the Court of Ava—Legislative Enactments—Public and Domestic Character of the People—Their Religion—and Literature.

I. STATISTICAL DETAILS.—The extent and boundaries of the Birmese dominions have been variously stated, and, changing as they continually are by the fortune of war, it is extremely difficult to state, with any thing like accuracy, the precise number of square miles over which his golden-footed Majesty bears sway. Malte Brun estimates the empire at about 1050 geographical miles in length, and 600 in breadth, in which, however, it must have suffered considerably by the recent cession of Arracan. Both he and Colonel Franklin agree in stating the number of square miles to be

about 194,000. The population of the empire was supposed by Colonel Symes, in 1795, to be 17,000,000; but Captain Cox, who succeeded Symes as an envoy to the court of Amerapoora, has rated it at only 8,000,000, while Colonel Franklin, who seems to have been at great pains in collecting information upon this and other subjects connected with the Birmese, proceeds, apparently upon sound data, in allowing only 25 inhabitants to a square mile, or a total population of little more than 5,000,000. The reason probably why a traveller, possessing the acuteness and intelligence of Colonel Symes, may have been led to form so erroneous an estimate is, that he judged of the entire country by the fertile and populous tracts which line the banks of the Irrawaddy. But this river, being the high road of the empire, evidently affords no fair rule by which to form an opinion of the remoter and less frequented districts. As nearly as Colonel Franklin could ascertain, there were in Amerapoora, the late capital, 25,000 houses, and, as the taxes are levied on houses, he supposes that seven persons may be allowed to each, which makes the population of that city only 175,000 souls. It has been further ascertained, that there are at most not more than 8000 cities, towns and villages, in the Birman dominions; and that these, owing to the necessity for the unprotected inhabitants uniting in societies, comprise probably nearly all the houses existing in the empire. Of these towns and villages the average is not more than 200 houses each, which gives the number of 1,600,000 houses, and this, at the rate of seven inhabitants to a house, yields a population of 11,200,000, of which

not more than one half can be considered in a state of fixed and effective allegiance.

It is a somewhat curious fact, that the proportion of women to men in the Birman empire is about four to one. Colonel Franklin's inquiries, however, convinced him that this great disproportion was not to be attributed to any natural cause, as he ascertained that the births of females did not exceed that of the males beyond what is common. It must be accounted for rather by the incessant wars in which the rapacious disposition of the Birmese sovereigns have continually involved their subjects. But from whatever cause this effect proceeds, the military force of the empire, a matter of some consequence, cannot fail to be deeply affected by it.

There is no standing land force, except a small ill-disciplined corps of artillery, a still smaller body of cavalry, and about 2000 infantry. The Birmese monarch's armies are always raised on the spur of the moment. The state council determines the number of men to be furnished by each district; and the Princes, Chobwas, and Lords, who hold their lands by military tenure, are bound to see that number made up without loss of time. When the rates are fixed, the two, four, or more houses which furnish one man, must advance, besides, 300 tecals (about 400 rupees) as his pay during the war, whatever its length may be. The recruit must furnish himself with a spear, sword, target, and musket; ammunition he receives gratis. Colonel Franklin was of opinion, that it would be difficult for the court of Ava to raise and maintain, for any length of time, an army exceeding 60,000 men. That he much underrated its ability in this respect, the events of the late war suf-

ficiently attest. To secure the fidelity of the conscripts, their families are always retained in the district to which they belong; and should their relation desert, are mercilessly burnt alive without distinction of age or sex.

The revenue of the country is a subject upon which we still remain in great uncertainty. It arises principally from the tribute of the Chobwas, the tithe of the produce of the crown lands, the mines, and the imports and exports. It is not a little increased also by the perpetual occurrence of confiscations, escheats, fines, donations, &c. &c. For the most part the revenues are collected in kind, with the exception of the tributes of the Chobwas, and the duties on cotton and some other articles, which are paid in bullion. The annual income of the public treasury does not probably exceed fifteen lacks of rupees per annum. But whatever may be the state of the funds set aside for public services, the personal wealth of the golden monarch is always immense, consisting not only of the accumulated treasures of his ancestors, but of the property of almost every man of wealth or consideration in the country, whom he generally takes care to proscribe at least once in the course of his reign. Nor does the provision which he may find it necessary to make for his children or his household diminish these stores; they are supported by grants of territory, privileges of markets, or of levying imposts, or of some other patrimonial or acquired method of Eastern aggrandizement. On the whole, the king of Ava is probably the richest prince in India.

The climate of Birmah is at once temperate and salubrious, and is perhaps superior to that of any

other country in the same parallel of latitude. "The seasons," says Colonel Franklin, "are regular, and a pestilence was never known. Earthquakes are very rare, and storms or tempests seldom felt." The rainy season, which lasts for about four months, and which is common to all these latitudes, is indeed almost the only inconvenience of the climate. The soil of the lower provinces in particular, is extremely fertile, producing, besides vast quantities of most valuable teak-wood, a great variety of grains, as well as indigo, tobacco, cotton, and sugar. Fruit is exceedingly plentiful, and some sorts are peculiar to the country; mangoes, oranges and melons, are abundant, and in great perfection. Vegetables of all kinds are also plentiful, and a dearth is seldom known. The country, likewise, is well stocked with mines and minerals. It contains, too, several mineral springs, as well as caverns and caves, which, if the accounts given of them be true, surpass every thing of the kind hitherto known.

The exports of Birmah are numerous and valuable. Of the raw materials, the teak-timber is undoubtedly entitled to the precedence. The consumption of this invaluable wood in the country itself is very great, both for their common houses, their numerous religious buildings, and their river-boats. Yet so inexhaustible are the forests which line the banks of the Irrawaddy, and some of the other rivers, that the supplies continue as abundant as ever, and little variation has occurred in the price. It is difficult to calculate the advantage which this country may derive from an extensive commerce in this article as a means of supporting that naval power, by which alone we are enabled

to retain the dominion of the seas. The article next in importance is cotton, of which great quantities are annually exported to China. Among many other articles of crude produce, it is proper to enumerate ivory, which in Birmah is considered royal property—wax, which is procured very plentifully—lead—copper—arsenic—tin, which is for the most part brought from Tavoy and Mergui—amber—indigo—paper, of two kinds, one made of the bark of the paper mulberry, white and fine, the other of the macerated filaments of bamboo, dark and coarse—birds' nests, in great request for the China market, and collected in small islands on the coast,—fish-maws, and shark-fins, also for the China market,—tobacco, which has been long cultivated and used in the country, and is probably indigenous, notwithstanding that some botanists maintain it to have been imported into Asia from America—honey, which is very plentiful, the Birman wilds being extensive, and abounding in bees—rice, nutritive, but coarse—precious stones, of all sorts except the diamond; but particularly rubies, of excellent quality, sapphires, emeralds, topazes, amethysts and garnets. Many other articles of a similar nature might be enumerated, but these are the principal.

We find likewise from Colonel Franklin, that the principal manufactures of the kingdom, at least those which are intended for its exportation, are, 1st, Ships built in Birmese ports, of which it was understood in 1801, that, on an average of the preceding ten years, 3000 tons were built per annum; 2d, Towelling, of which they are famous for making a rough kind; 3d, Earthen ware from Pegue, which has long been celebrated for this manufac-

ture; 4th, Saltpetre, not well refined, and one cause consequently of the badness of their gunpowder; 5th, Silks of various kinds, of which, however, few are exported; and, 6th, Silver Bullion, according to the weight of which, of various standards, from the want of a current coin, the Birmese generally keep their accounts.

The number of vessels which may belong to Birmese merchants cannot be great. The character of the people in time of peace, the continuance of which can never be calculated on for a year at a time, is unquestionably more of an agricultural than commercial kind. They are very indifferent sailors, their voyages being seldom any thing else than coasting expeditions, through channels little exposed, and the greater part of their export trade being carried on in foreign bottoms. To the possession of a navy, they have not the most distant pretensions, the only thing in the shape of a marine force, which they can boast, consisting of the Irrawaddy war-boats, described by Colonel Symes and others. The largest of these are from 80 to 100 feet long, but in breadth they seldom exceed 8 feet. They carry from 50 to 60 rowers, and a piece of ordnance proportionate to the size of the boat. Each rower is armed, and a party of soldiers is also commonly on board. They sail in fleets, and their attack is very impetuous. The sailors encourage each other, by singing a war-song, and can impel the vessel with either the stern or the prow foremost. The largest of these boats does not draw more than three feet of water. In a military point of view, they are the most respectable part of the Birman force.

To these details we have only to add, that Bir-

mah is in general divided into the Upper and Lower provinces, Amerapoora or Ava being probably about the centre of the empire. To the north and east of that capital, the country is mountainous, but intersected by many delightful valleys, under the command of the numerous petty princes named Chobwas, who pay a certain annual tribute. The inhabitants of these districts are called Shans, which may not inappropriately be translated Highlanders. From Ava to Prome, within which boundaries lie the most central parts of the Birmese empire, the country is much more level, and the soil on the banks of the river is perhaps the richest in the world. The ancient kingdom of Tonghoo is also fertile, but thinly inhabited. The country between Prome and Rangoon, which now constitutes Lower Ava, and was formerly the kingdom of Pegue, is populous and well cultivated; and it is with this part of the empire that the British are as yet best acquainted.

II. PECULIARITIES OF THE COURT OF AVA.—The constitution of the Birman government is, in the strictest sense of the word, despotic. The king is above all the laws, and the most implicit obedience to his commands is inculcated as the first duty of the subject. Assuming, as he does, titles which in their sounding emptiness mock the weakness of humanity, the lord of earth and air hesitates not to arrogate the prerogative, and exact the adoration paid to a deity. The very existence of all the most ancient usages and customs of the country depend upon his voice; and life, liberty and property, are toys with which he sports at will. His external splendour far exceeds that of

any European sovereign; and as we have already said, his wealth is inexhaustible. His privy counsel, who advise with him on affairs of state, consists commonly of four old men, his personal friends, to whom experience may be supposed to have taught wisdom, and the advance of life to have moderated the ambition and calmed the passions of youth. There is, besides, a great public council where the king commonly presides, and where nothing can be determined without his sanction.

Pride, as well as splendour, is a characteristic feature of the Birmese court; both are indeed the common attendants of tyranny. The reception which the various ambassadors have met with whom the British Government of India have seen cause to send to Ava, sufficiently marks the haughty and unbending tone which that court is disposed to assume towards foreigners. Unlike the powers of Hindostan, with whom we have had occasion to have any intercourse, and who, from the days of Tamerlane, have undeviatingly observed the same formalities towards our envoys, the Birmans always received them with jealousy, frequently treated them with insolence, and almost always dismissed them unceremoniously. Whether the late war may have effected any change in their sentiments upon this subject, is yet to be proved; but certainly the facts mentioned both by Colonel Symes, and his still less fortunate successor, Captain Cox, are enough to rouse indignation, if they had not previously excited contempt.

But it is not towards foreigners alone that this farce of unapproachable sublimity is attempted to be kept up on the part of his celestial majesty. Every artifice is resorted to which power can com-

mand, or wealth execute, or superstition enhance to inspire the minds of the people with the profoundest awe, veneration, and fear of their emperor. He rarely goes abroad; but when he does, it is always in a style of more than Oriental magnificence, and probably for the purpose of laying the foundation of some splendid religious structure, or of consecrating, when finished, some golden pagoda of dazzling grandeur. With the same motives also, it is the policy of the court frequently to change the seat of government, and consequently the residence of the emperor. Amerapoora, so long known by the proud title of the Immortal City, is not now the capital of Birmah. In 1824 a new palace was building at Old Ava, of which the king was to take possession as soon as finished; and of course the wooden houses, temples, and colonnades of Amerapoora would speedily follow him. The wives, children, brothers, and other relations of the king, have always residences near his, in a style of proportionate pomp.

The Birmese being naturally a gay careless people, have many stated days of public amusement and idleness. The court condescends to take part in their sports only once or twice a year. Upon these occasions its favourite entertainment is an exhibition of fire-works, got up under the superintendance of numerous dependant princes, who vie with each other in the brilliancy and costliness of their preparations, and not unfrequently receive presents from the king when they have the good fortune to please him. The principal part of these fire-works are rockets of a size infinitely exceeding any thing known in this country. When

Captain Cox was at Amerapoora, the Lord of Earth and Air himself cut down too large trees to make into rockets, each of which was to contain 10,500 pounds of gunpowder. The effect produced by the simultaneous firing of ten or twenty such rockets must be somewhat striking.

Upon these public occasions his Majesty usually appears in one of his splendid imperial state carriages. That which was captured during the late war, and publicly exhibited in this country, afforded a tolerable specimen of what these state carriages are. It was one of the most singular and magnificent productions of art that can well be imagined, presenting one entire blaze of gold, silver, and precious stones, the number of the latter amounting to many thousands, — comprehending diamonds, rubies, white and blue sapphires, emeralds, amethysts, garnets, topazes, and crystals of all sorts. The carving was of a very superior description; and the form and construction of the carriage, though curious to European eyes, was nevertheless in such good taste, and the workmanship so chaste and refined, that the general effect was exceedingly imposing. It was between twenty and thirty feet high, and is in Birmah always drawn by elephants.

Ridiculous as the importance attached to these matters by this Eastern despot may seem, it is probably well for the country over which he bears sway that his dispositions lead him to indulge in excesses of no more criminal a kind. The Birman monarch, conscious as he is of his own power, and willing enough on many occasions to exert it to the utmost, does not on the whole seem desirous to interfere materially with the domestic ha-

bits and happiness of his people. To those at a distance, whom he knows to be possessed of power as well as himself, he is invariably reserved and haughty; to those whom birth or accidental circumstances have given a high, and perhaps formidable rank in the state, he seldom scruples at the dictates, either of prudence or fear, to be both cruel and unjust; but to those whom fortune has placed in what he regards an unmeasurable grade below him in the scale of creation, he is altogether indifferent, viewing them only as tools in the hands of his magistrates and governors, by which to effect his measures of state policy. This will perhaps appear still more clear when we have said a few words on

III. BIRMESE LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS.—All the cities throughout the empire are governed by Maywhoons, who apparently correspond pretty nearly with our Lord Mayors. The Maywhoon is commonly assisted by three other civil magistrates, who act as judges in all civil and criminal suits, holding their court in the town-hall or "Place of Truth," of which there is one in every city. Besides, every great officer, whether civil or military, is a justice of peace within a certain district, and can try petty causes, and punish trespasses by flogging, fine, or imprisonment. One of the great evils, indeed, to which the people are exposed, arises from the multiplicity of these officers, who claim the privilege of acting as justices of peace. All causes must originate in the town-hall, but may be removed by appeal to the Lotoo, or Great Court of the empire, and ultimately to

his Majesty in Council; but the expense of obtaining a hearing there is enormous.

In addition to the common mode of deciding causes, which is by the ancient written law, much altered, it is true, by subsequent custom from its original institutes, trials by ordeal, varying a good deal from those of India, are common throughout the empire. Of trials of this kind, Captain Cox mentions the following curious instance which took place, to ascertain the truth of an accusation of adultery against a native. "The defendant denying the charge, the principals, witnesses and court, adjourned to a small pagoda without the walls of the town, when all the parties were solemnly sworn according to the rites of the Birman faith, the depositions of the witnesses taken down, and the Deity invoked by the priest to judge between the parties. A certain quantity of wax was weighed in two equal portions, and formed into two candles, which were lighted at the same instant. One was held by the plaintiff, the other by the defendant; and the holder of the candle which first burned out was adjudged to have sworn falsely, and of course lost the cause, and would be sentenced to pay the cost of the suit, amounting to 400 tecals, and damages 300 tecals. In this case, the defendant's candle burned out first, when the people gave a shout, and the plaintiff's friends having prepared a band of music and dancers, they exhibited before the people."

In their punishments the Birmans are exceedingly severe. The mildest manner of suffering death is to have the head taken off with a large knife, commonly at one stroke. Killing, by various modes of barbarous torture, is much more common.

Reprieves may not unfrequently be purchased with money, however deserving of punishment the malefactors be; but, if money be wanting, the slightest offence is visited without mercy. Mrs Judson, who writes an account of the American Baptist Mission to the Birman empire, relates the particulars of one or two executions at which she and her husband were present. The scenes were shocking in the extreme. On one occasion "four Birmans were fastened to a high fence, first by the hair of the head and neck; their arms were then extended horizontally, as far as they could be stretched, without dislocation, and a cord tied tight around them; their thighs and legs were then tied in their natural position; they were ripped open from the lowest to the highest extremity of the stomach, and their vitals and part of their bowels were hanging out; large gashes were cut in a downward direction in their sides and thighs, so as to bare the ribs and thigh-bones. One, who I suppose was more guilty than the rest, had an iron instrument thrust sidelong through the breast, and part of his vitals pushed out in the opposite direction. Thus, with the under jaw fallen, their eyes open and fixed, naked, excepting a cloth round the middle, they hung dead." Afterwards, Mrs Judson was present when six men were executed. There were seven culprits in all; but of these two were brothers, who requested to be shot, asking, at the same time, to be pardoned if the fourth shot should miss. The elder brother was fired at four times without effect, and was then loosed from the tree to which he had been tied, amidst the shouts and laughter of

the spectators. The younger brother was less fortunate; he expired at the second shot. The remaining five were beheaded each at one blow. "We went close to them," says Mrs Judson, "and saw their trunks and their heads and their blood. We saw a man put his foot on one of the trunks, and press it with as little feeling as one would tread upon a beast." This piece of wanton cruelty must not however be considered as characteristic of national feeling, as it is likely that none but the worst characters frequented such scenes as these. The crimes of the poor creatures alluded to were various. One had been digging under a pagoda; another had stabbed a woman, but had not killed her; and the rest were robbers.

One great object of the Birmese laws, is to secure the allegiance of the subject to the sovereign. The form of the oath of allegiance is particularly solemn and imposing. A book of religious institutions, and an image with a bowl of water, are placed before the person who is about to take it. The image is held up before him, he lifts the bowl in his hands, and repeats these words:—"In the presence of the Creator of five thousand worlds, with all the saints therein, five large rivers, and five hundred small, the seas and all therein, I call all the saints and angels in heaven and earth to bear me witness, that I wish to be a true and faithful subject of the king of Ava. May God grant, that, if I should desert his service, I may not pass in safety by water, but the fishes of the ocean may devour and tear me to pieces! May God grant, that, if I should desert his service, I may not pass in safety by land, but be devoured

by wild beasts of the earth! May God grant, that, if I should not keep this oath, and ever rebel against my king and country, the above may happen to me; that I may be afflicted with the scourges of the Almighty, and die an ignominious death!" This oath is thrice repeated; the paper on which it is inscribed is then burnt, and the ashes put into the bowl of water, in which the muzzle of a musket and the points of a sabre and lance being dipped, the person says:—"May these weapons become the instruments of my destruction, if ever I swerve from the oath I have just taken!" The priest then presents the bowl, and the water is drank. Should the oath ever be swerved from, the delinquent is consigned to a capital punishment of the most dreadful kind, commonly impalement, and his house and family are burnt.

There is a great number of slaves in the Birman empire, the father of a family being always allowed to sell his wife and children for the payment of his debts. This he is frequently obliged to do, not on account of any debts which he voluntarily incurs, but because, under this despotic government, a tax is frequently levied on an individual much beyond his ability to pay, and he is put to the torture until the sum be produced. The case, however, is still harder when the parent dies in debt; for then the creditor may lay claim to the orphans, and either retain them himself, or sell them for an equivalent sum. Notwithstanding all these severities, however, the Birman system of laws contains much that is good; and, on the whole, we doubt extremely that there is a greater proportion of crime or misery in that em-

pire, than will be found in countries which boast of a greater share of civilization.

IV. PUBLIC AND DOMESTIC CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.—It is a matter of extreme difficulty to speak with any accuracy of national character, even where we have had numerous opportunities, by frequent intercourse and personal observation, to draw our own conclusions regarding it. Of a nation till lately so little known to us, and concerning which its unfriendly dispositions towards us have tended to foster so many prejudices, it becomes us to speak with every caution and forbearance. In time of war, more especially if the country be ravaged by an invading army, it is next to impossible for those invaders to form any just conception of the people whom they have come to conquer and to kill. In speaking of the Birmese, therefore, as a nation, we should much rather allow ourselves to be guided by the opinions entertained, and the facts stated, by such of our countrymen as happen to have had an opportunity of visiting it in times of peace and tranquillity. Yet even they, we find, disagree widely among themselves. Nor is this to be wondered at, considering the various aspects under which various circumstances place different foreigners. Colonel Symes, we have seen, entertained, on the whole, rather a favourable impression of the Birmese, though he by no means shut his eyes to some of their ruling vices—such as cunning, avarice, and cruelty. On the whole, we are disposed to think with him, that we shall get nearest the truth by taking a middle course. If they are apt to be audacious and haughty towards strangers, it cannot be deni-

ed that they are in no slight degree patriotic and courageous. If, in their dealings with each other, they are too often litigious and deceitful, they are at the same time charitable to their priests and the poor, and much inclined to be hospitable and cheerful. If in war they are treacherous and ferocious, they are also patient under sufferings, frugal and hardy. If in their persons, houses, and food, they are inclined, from a lazy habit, to be careless and filthy, they are in general affectionate parents, dutiful children, sincere friends, and not vindictive enemies. Mrs Judson, an intelligent woman, who has lived many years in the Birman empire, goes still further. She describes the Birmese as "a lively, industrious, and energetic race, further advanced in civilization than most of the Eastern nations. They are frank, candid, and destitute of that pusillanimity which distinguishes the Hindoos, and of that revengeful malignity which is a leading trait in the Malay character."

Some of their Domestic customs are curious. We can only mention a few. If a young woman grows ill, the doctor and her parents frequently enter into an agreement, that, if she lives, the doctor shall take her as his property; but, if she dies, that he shall pay her value to the parents. "I do not know," says Dr Buchanan, a writer of much research, "if the doctor may sell the girl again, or must retain her in his family; but the number of fine young women, which I saw in the house of a doctor at Meaday, makes me think the practice to be very common."

In their food, the Birmans, according to our notions, are very uncleanly. The lower classes

eat all kinds of reptiles, lizards, guanas, and snakes. Their religion forbids them killing animal food; and, consequently, animals that have died from disease are generally eaten throughout the country. Captain Cox thinks that this custom, in which they resemble their neighbours the Chinese, is the cause of a dreadful disorder that attacks the extremities with ulcerous sores, which soon mortify, and leave those that survive disgusting and mutilated objects. Horse-flesh is in peculiar estimation among all the artificers in metals, who think it best calculated to recruit the strength wasted by working at their forges. Venison is the only meat permitted to be sold in the markets, a privilege allowed for the encouragement of hunters. The killing of a cow is punished with particular severity.

The Birmans are exceedingly fond of gayety and amusements of all sorts. In private, chess is their favourite entertainment, a game they deservedly hold in high estimation. Their board is the same as ours, and so is the number of their pieces; but they vary considerably in power. They arrange them in three rows, so that some squares on either hand are left unoccupied. The game, as played by them, is a good deal more complex than ours. Their sacred writings prohibit all games of chance; but they expressly authorize chess. Music is another favourite recreation of the Birmans. Their musical instruments, though, in many respects, rude and imperfect, are yet capable of producing tones of much power and sweetness. Their softer airs, in particular, please even the somewhat fastidious ears of foreigners. Their principal instruments are, a harp of uncouth con-

struction; a *turr*, which is something like our violin; a *pullaway*, which is a common flageolet; a *kye-zoup*, which is composed of a collection of cymbals, producing modulated gradations of sounds; a *patola*, or guitar, made in the shape of a crocodile, and used as an accompaniment to the voice; a *boundaw*, or collection of drums, used in full bands in processions; and a *heem*, or pipe of Pan, composed of reeds, neatly joined together, and producing soft plaintive melody. Dr Buchanan purchased a whole set of these musical instruments for something under six guineas; and suggests, that it would be no unprofitable speculation, to import into this country a band of Birmese musicians, who would probably attract considerable attention. Almost every Birman has some instrument or other to beguile his vacant hours; he who can procure no better, is contented with a Jew's harp.

Their public amusements consist principally of exhibitions of fire-works, in which they greatly delight, and which, during certain annual festivals, are always provided at the expense of government. Water contests, too, as described by Colonel Symes, and which seem to be a kind of substitute for the want of snow-balls, are common, and much relished. The Birmese are likewise a dramatic people, and give considerable encouragement to stage representations, although it does not appear that they have made much progress beyond pantomime and melo-drama. Indian jugglers, and other mountebanks, are continually perambulating the country; and, on the whole, they appear to have almost a Parisian delight in strange sights and shows.

In personal appearance, the Birmese resemble the Chinese more than the Hindoos. The men are, in general, not much above the middle size, but are robust and active; and, from a custom they have of plucking out their beards, retain a youthful appearance for a long time. In their temperament there is little of the languid inactivity which distinguishes the natives of Hindostan. The nose is generally small, but not flattened like that of the negro. Their complexion is dark, a kind of medium between the deep tinge of the inhabitant of Africa and the clear bloom of the European; it is, in fact, of a light yellow. The women are somewhat fairer, and, in general, well made, though inclined to corpulence; their hair is almost always black. Mixed with the Birmese are the remains of several peculiar tribes. The Shans or Highlanders, already mentioned, are the most remarkable. They are distinguished by their simple, honest, and inoffensive manners, and speak a dialect peculiar to themselves. These tribes, however, live on the best terms with the Birmese. What is still more fortunate for that people, there does not exist among them any such thing as caste—the chief curse of many parts of India. Society is with them founded on a much more liberal basis, the path to rank, wealth, and honour, being open alike to all. This is, of itself, sufficient to secure for them a much more rapid progress in the scale of nations, than can ever be made by many of the surrounding countries.

RELIGION.—There cannot be a doubt that the Birmese are entitled to be considered a devout

and pious people, although what they term religion would hardly go under that appellation in any part of Europe. Whilst they believe in the existence of various gods, or of human beings who have become gods, they have formed no conception whatever of a Supreme Being, who has created, and preserves the universe. The system of morals, however, which their religious doctrines inculcate, is good; and the fear of punishment, and hope of reward, are the motives held out for the practice of virtue. Godama or Gaudma, their supreme divinity, is believed by them to have been the fourth incarnation of Buddha. The particular attributes with which they invest him, as well as the leading principles of their creed, will be best understood by a perusal of the following very interesting catechism, translated from the original Birmese by Dr Buchanan, and which we have ventured on slightly abridging, to adapt it better to our limits. It is entitled,

*A Short View of the Religion of Godama.*

"A Catholic Bishop, residing at Ava, some time ago asked the chief Rahan, called Zaradobura, to give him some short treatise, which would explain the heads of the law taught by Godama. The Zarado, willing to satisfy the Bishop, wrote for his use the following treatise:—

"The gods who have appeared in this present world, and who have obtained the perfect state, *Nieban*, are four, Chauchasam, Gonagom, Gaspa, and Godama.

"*Q.* Of which of these gods ought the law at present to be followed?

"*A.* Of the god Godama.

"*Q.* Where is the god Godama?

"*A.* Godama, at the age of thirty-five years, having obtained divinity, preached his law for forty-five years, and brought salvation to all living beings. At eighty years of

age he obtained *Nieban*, and this happened 2362 years ago. Then Godama said, ' After I shall have departed from this earth, I will preserve my law and disciples for five thousand years; ' and he commanded that his images and relics should be worshipped, which has accordingly been ever since done.

" *Q.* In saying that Godama obtained *Nieban*, what is understood by that word ?

" *A.* When a person is no longer subject to any of the following miseries, namely, to weight, old age, disease, and death, then he is said to have obtained *Nieban*. No thing, no place, can give us an adequate idea of *Nieban ;* we commonly say, that to be free from the four above mentioned miseries, and to obtain salvation, is *Nieban*. In the same manner as when any person, labouring under a severe disease, recovers by the assistance of medicine, we say, he has obtained health ; but if any person wishes to know the manner, or cause of his thus obtaining health, it can only be answered, that to be restored to health signifies no more than to be recovered from disease. In the same manner only can we speak of Nieban, and after this manner Godama taught.

" *Q.* Is not Godama the only true god on the face of this earth ?

" *A.* Godama is the only true and pure god, who knows the four laws called Sizza, and who can bestow *Nieban*. In the same manner as on the destruction of a kingdom, many arise who aspire to the throne, and who assume the royal insignia ; so, when the time fixed for the duration of the law preceding Godama had expired, and it had been prophesied for a thousand years that a new god was about to appear, six men, before the coming of Godama, pretended that they were gods, and each of them was followed by five hundred disciples.

" *Q.* Did those false gods preach no doctrine ?

" *A.* They did preach, but that which they taught was false.

" *Q.* What did they teach ?

" *A.* One taught, that the cause of all the good and evil which happen in the world, of poverty and wealth, of nobility and want of rank, was a certain superior *Nat* of the woods, who, on this account, ought to be worshipped by mankind.

" A second taught, that after death men were by no

means changed into animals, and that animals, on being slain, were not changed into men: but that, after death, men were always born men, and animals born aaimals.

" A third denied the proper *Nieban*, and asserted, that all living beings had their beginning in their mother's womb, and would have their end in death; and that there is no other *Nieban* but this death.

" A fourth taught, that all living things neither had a beginning, nor would have an end; and that every thing which happens arises from a fortuitous and blind fate. He denied the lot of good and evil deeds, which, according to the law of Godama, is the efficient cause of all the good and evil that happen to living beings.

" The fifth taught, that Nieban consists in nothing more than the life of certain *Nat* and *Biamma*, who live for the whole duration of a world. He asserted, that the chief good works are, to honour our parents, to endure the heat of the sun or of the fire, and to support hunger; that there is no crime in killing animals. He said, that such as performed these good works, would be rewarded in a future life, and that such as did the contrary would be punished.

" The last taught, that there existed a being, who had created the world, and all things which are therein, and that this being only is worthy to be adored. *

" Now all these false gods or deitti taught such things, not because they believed them to be true, but in order to answer questions which had been proposed to them, they said whatever at the time came into their minds.

" *Q.* When the true god Godama appeared, did not the false gods renounce their doctrines?

" *A.* Some of them did, but others still continue obstinate; and with all these Godama fought in the kingdom Saulti, near the tree Manche. What greater miracle can be performed?

" *Q.* In this conflict, who gained the superiority?

" *A.* Godama did; on which account the ringleader of the false gods was so ashamed, that, tying a pot about his neck, he threw himself into a river, and was drowned.

" *Q.* What is the doctrine and law which Godama delivered to be observed by all men?

* Here the Zarado probably alludes to Devadat, as the *Ruhans* call Jesus Christ.

"*A.* It consists chiefly in observing the five commandments, and in abstaining from the ten sins.

"*Q.* What are the five commandments?

"*A.* I. From the meanest insect up to man, thou shalt kill no animal whatever. II. Thou shalt not steal. III. Thou shalt not violate the wife or concubine of another. IV. Thou shalt tell nothing false. V. Thou shalt drink neither wine, nor any thing that will intoxicate; thou shalt not eat opium, nor other inebriating drug. Whoever keeps these five commandments, during all successive transmigrations, shall either be born a nobleman, or *Nat*, and shall not be liable to poverty, nor to other misfortunes and calamities.

"*Q.* What are the ten sins?

"*A.* These are called by the common appellation *Duzzaraik*, and are divided into three classes. In the first class are comprehended the works which are contrary to the commandments; namely, I. The killing of animals. II. Theft. III. Adultery. In the second class are contained, IV. Falsehood. V. Discord. VI. Harsh and indignant language. VII. Idle and superfluous talk. To the third class belong, VIII. The coveting of your neighbour's goods. IX. Envy, and the desire of your neighbour's death, and misfortunes. X. The following of the doctrine of false gods. He who abstains from these sins is said to observe *Sila;* and every one who observes *Sila*, in all successive transmigrations, will continually increase in virtue, till at length he will become worthy of beholding a god, of hearing his great voice; and thus he will obtain *Nieban*, and be exempted from the four known miseries, namely, weight, old age, disease, and death. We must also believe, that Godama taught, if we observe his laws, we shall see the other gods who are to arise after him.

"Revolving these things in your minds, O ye *English*, *Dutch*, *Armenians*, and others, adore Godama, the true God! Adore also his law and his priests. Be solicitous in giving alms, in the observance of *Sila*, and in performing *Bavana*. But a true and legitimate priest of Godama is not to be found, except in this empire, or in the island of Ceylon; and you, O bishop! have obtained a great lot, who have been thought worthy, although born in one of the small islands depending on *Zabudiba*, to come hither, and to hear the truth of the divine law. This book which

I now give you, is more estimable than gold and silver, than diamonds and precious stones. And I exhort all *English*, *Dutch*, *Armenians*, and others, faithfully to transcribe its contents, and diligently to act according to the precepts therein contained."

The veneration paid to Godama throughout the empire, is great and unceasing. Of the manner in which the religious ceremonies upon great occasions are performed, Mrs Judson thus writes. "This is the season for the great feast of Gaudama. It commenced yesterday, and is to continue for three days. It is observed all over the country; but I presume the multitude collected in this place is much greater than at any other, excepting Ava. Priests and people come in boats from a great distance to worship at the pagoda in this place, which is supposed to contain the relick of Gaudama. The viceroy, on these days, goes out in all the pomp and splendour possible, dressed and ornamented with all the insignia of office, attended by the members of government and the common people. After kneeling and worshipping at the pagoda, they generally spend the day in amusements, such as boxing, dancing, singing, theatrical exhibitions, and fireworks. Most of the older people spend the night at the pagoda, and listen to the instructions of the priests."

Of course, the priests are in Birmah a numerous and popular tribe. They live by themselves in monasteries, wear yellow apparel to distinguish their shaven heads and unshod feet, and are supported by voluntary contributions. Persons of all ages are admitted into the priesthood. They live a life of celibacy, and perform no labour. Their days of public worship are indicated by the four quarters of the moon. Those of the full and new moon are the most solemn.

As was to be expected, the Birmans are not contented with being religious alone, but are also grossly superstitious. Astrologers are in great repute among them, who predict lucky and unlucky days, watch the position of the planets at the birth

of children, and read a man's fortune on the palm of his hand. The existence of evil spirits, ghosts, witches, and all kind of demons, is firmly credited. They suppose that certain kinds of diseases may be frightened away by making a great noise; and the medical profession is peculiarly under the control of superstition, charms being firmly believed in, and an ideal potency attached to many medicinal compounds. The dead are burned or buried (the former being considered the most honourable) with religious rites; but it does not appear that matrimonial connexions are considered as having any thing to do with the tenets of Godama. In no country, indeed, are marriages more quickly got up, polygamy being allowed, and a Birman sometimes taking to himself three or four wives in the course of a month. Upon this subject much more that is interesting and important might be written, but our space forbids. *

VI. LITERATURE.—The Birmese are a well educated people, at least the male part of the community, the boys throughout the empire being taught by the priests both to read and write. There is a library in almost every monastery. In their more elegant books they write on sheets of ivory, or on very fine white palmyra leaves. The margins of the former are ornamented with gilding, and of the latter with flowers painted in various bright colours. In their more common books

* We would refer those who are desirous of more information concerning the religion of the Birmese, to an exceedingly able and erudite paper by Dr Buchanan, in the 6th Vol. of the Asiatic Researches, where much new and curious information will be found.

less pains are taken, the characters being engraved with an iron stile on palmyra leaves of an inferior texture. The contents of these books are various. Those upon law and religion are mostly translated from the ancient Pali language, which is probably the same as the Sanscrit. There are many treatises on law. On medicine also there are several books of authority; but little is known of surgery, unless the art of dressing wounds and setting bones. Inoculation, too, has been lately introduced, but is not yet general. The Birmans have many histories, principally of the lives and actions of their own kings; and, like some of the most celebrated Greek and Roman historians, the writers always take care to give a particular account of all the omens and prodigies which accompanied the events they relate. They have also translated for their own use the histories of the Chinese, the Siamese, and some other neighbouring nations. They are excessively fond of poetry; but their poetry is almost entirely lyrical, and most of it written for the purpose of being adapted to music. Their dramatic entertainments are principally musical, with a little dancing and dialogue introduced occasionally. The subject is commonly taken from some of the legends of their heroes; and after the different characters and songs have been assigned to the different performers, the dialogue itself is left to the extemporaneous ingenuity of the actor. These actors are for the most part Siamese, and exhibit in general before an indulgent and easily pleased audience.

The Birman language seems to be far from having arrived at any fixed state of grammatical perfection. In its original state it was probably purely

monosyllabic ; but as the Pali has been very liberally engrafted on it, many polysyllables have been consequently formed. " It has no inflexions," says a writer upon this subject, " and depends almost entirely on juxtaposition for the relative value of its words. Its pronouns and particles are peculiar, its idioms few and simple, its metaphors of the most obvious kind, but it is copious in terms expressive of rank and dignity ; and the rank of the speaker is indicated by the peculiar phraseology which he employs. Repetitions of the same turn and expression are affected, rather than shunned ; and a sententious brevity and naked simplicity of phrase are the greatest beauties of which the language admits." One great impediment in the way of obtaining a critical knowledge of the Birman language is, that there is no regular standard of orthography, nor no grammar rules of universal application. Every author spells after a fashion of his own ; and what is good grammar with one, is considered grossly inaccurate by another. Mr and Mrs Judson studied the language for two years, before making any considerable progress in it. With the exception, indeed, of the solitary circumstance, that the Birmans write from left to right, there is no one common feature between any of their books and those of Europe. The forms of expression, the shape of the letters, the appearance of the words, which are not divided and distinguished by breaks, points, and capitals, but run together in one unbroken line, making a whole paragraph look like one word, the characters scratched on dried palm-leaves, and every thing, in short, that forms the constituent parts of

a book, bears an oriental, and, to the conceptions of a foreigner, a new and strange appearance.

There can be little doubt, that the introduction into Birmah of some of the improvements made by the Western nations, in the art of disseminating knowledge, would be attended with the happiest results in that country. Nor is there much reason to fear, that one of the consequences of the late war, or rather of the terms of peace, will be the gradual diffusion of many European customs and luxuries over that empire. It is a most important fact, that though female education seems to be intentionally neglected, there is hardly a male throughout the empire who cannot both read and write. The Birmese, though a vain, are not a bigoted or narrow-minded people; and the day is probably not far distant, when the enlightening influence of their British neighbours, combined with their own increasing willingness to receive instruction, may raise them to a rank, hitherto arrogated, more through a spirit of empty pride, than fairly won, either by their military prowess, or intellectual and moral greatness.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Bell, Henry G.

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